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THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY.¹

VI.

ISABEL ARCHER was a young person of many theories; her imagination was remarkably active. It had been her fortune to possess a finer mind than most of the persons among whom her lot was cast; to have a larger perception of surrounding facts, and to care for knowledge that was tinged with the unfamiliar. It is true that among her contemporaries she passed for a young woman of extraordinary profundity; for these excellent people never withheld their admiration from a reach of intellect of which they themselves were not conscious, and spoke of Isabel as a prodigy of learning, a young lady reputed to have read the classic authors—in translations. Her paternal aunt, Mrs. Varian, once spread the rumour that Isabel was writing a book—Mrs. Varian having a reverence for books—and averred that Isabel would distinguish herself in print. Mrs. Varian thought highly of literature, for which she entertained that esteem that is connected with a sense of privation. Her own large house, remarkable for its assortment of mosaic tables and decorated ceilings, was unfurnished with a library, and in the way of printed volumes contained nothing but half a dozen novels in paper, on a shelf in the apartment of one of the

Miss Varians. Practically, Mrs. Varian's acquaintance with literature was confined to the *New York Interviewer*; (as she very justly said, after you had read the *Interviewer*, you had no time for anything else. Her tendency, however, was rather to keep the *Interviewer* out of the way of her daughters; she was determined to bring them up seriously, and they read nothing at all. Her impression with regard to Isabel's labours was quite illusory; the girl never attempted to write a book, and had no desire to do so. She had no talent for expression, and had none of the consciousness of genius; she only had a general idea that people were right when they treated her as if she were rather superior. Whether or no she were superior, people were right in admiring her if they thought her so; for it seemed to her often that her mind moved more quickly than theirs, and this encouraged an impatience that might easily be confounded with superiority. It may be affirmed, without delay, that Isabel was probably very liable to the sin of self-esteem; she often surveyed with complacency the field of her own nature; she was in the habit of taking for granted, on scanty evidence, that she was right; impulsively, she often admired herself. Meanwhile her errors and delusions were frequently such as a biographer

¹ Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1880, by Henry James, jun., in the office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

interested in preserving the dignity of his heroine must shrink from specifying. Her head was full of premature convictions and unproportioned images, which had never been corrected by the judgment of people who seemed to her to speak with authority. Intellectually, morally, she had had her own way, and it had led her into a thousand ridiculous zigzags. Every now and then she found out she was wrong, and then she treated herself to a week of passionate humility. After this she held her head higher than ever again; for it was of no use, she had an unquenchable desire to think well of herself. She had a theory that it was only on this condition that life was worth living; that one should be one of the best, should be conscious of a fine organisation (she could not help knowing her organisation was fine), should move in a realm of light, of natural wisdom, of happy impulse, of inspiration gracefully chronic. It was almost as unnecessary to cultivate doubt of oneself as to cultivate doubt of one's best friend; one should try to be one's own best friend, and to give oneself, in this manner, distinguished company. The girl had a certain nobleness of imagination which rendered her a good many services, and played her a great many tricks. She spent half her time in thinking of beauty, and bravery, and magnanimity; she had a fixed determination to regard the world as a place of brightness, of free expansion, of irresistible action; she thought it would be detestable to be afraid or ashamed. She had an infinite hope that she should never do anything wrong. She had resented so strongly, after discovering them, her mere errors of feeling (the discovery always made her tremble, as if she had escaped from a trap which might have caught her and smothered her), that the chance of inflicting a sensible injury upon another person, presented only as a contingency, caused her at moments to hold her breath. That always seemed to her the worst thing

that could happen to one. On the whole, reflectively, she was in no uncertainty about the things that were wrong. She had no taste for thinking of them, but whenever she looked at them fixedly she recognised them. It was wrong to be mean, to be jealous, to be false, to be cruel; she had seen very little of the evil of the world, but she had seen women who lied and who tried to hurt each other. Seeing such things had quickened her high spirit; it seemed right to scorn them. Of course the danger of a high spirit is the danger of inconsistency—the danger of keeping up the flag after the place has surrendered; a sort of behaviour so anomalous as to be almost a dishonour to the flag. But Isabel, who knew nothing of the forces that life might bring against her, flattered herself that such contradictions would never be observed in her own conduct. Her life should always be in harmony with the most pleasing impression she should produce; she would be what she appeared, and she would appear what she was. Sometimes she went so far as to wish that she should find herself some day in a difficult position, so that she might have the pleasure of being as largely heroic as the occasion demanded. Altogether, with her meagre knowledge, her inflated ideals, her confidence at once innocent and dogmatic, her temper at once exacting and indulgent, her mixture of curiosity and fastidiousness, of vivacity and indifference, her desire to look very well and to be, if possible, even better; her determination to see, to try, to know; her combination of the delicate, desultory, flame-like spirit and the eager and personal young girl, she would be an easy victim of scientific criticism, if she were not intended to awaken on the reader's part an impulse more tender and more purely expectant.

It was one of her theories that Isabel Archer was very fortunate in being independent, and that she ought to make some very enlightened use of

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her independence. She never called it loneliness; she thought that weak; and besides, her sister Lily constantly urged her to come and stay with her. She had a friend whose acquaintance she had made shortly before her father's death, who offered so laudable an example of useful activity that Isabel always thought of her as a model. Henrietta Stackpole had the advantage of a remarkable talent; she was thoroughly launched in journalism, and her letters to the *Interviewer*, from Washington, Newport, the White Mountains, and other places, were universally admired. Isabel did not accept them unrestrictedly, but she esteemed the courage, energy, and good-humour of her friend, who, without parents and without property, had adopted three of the children of an infirm and widowed sister, and was paying their school-bills out of the proceeds of her literary labour. Henrietta was a great radical, and had clear-cut views on most subjects; her cherished desire had long been to come to Europe and write a series of letters to the *Interviewer*, from the radical point of view—an enterprise the less difficult as she knew perfectly in advance what her opinions would be, and to how many objections most European institutions lay open. When she heard that Isabel was coming, she wished to start at once; thinking, naturally, that it would be delightful that they should travel together. She had been obliged, however, to postpone this enterprise. She thought Isabel a glorious creature, and had spoken of her, covertly, in some of her letters, though she never mentioned the fact to her friend, who would not have taken pleasure in it, and was not a regular reader of the *Interviewer*. Henrietta, for Isabel, was chiefly a proof that a woman might suffice to herself and be happy. Her resources were of the obvious kind; but even if one had not the journalistic talent and a genius for guessing, as Henrietta said, what the public was going to want, one was not

therefore to conclude that one had no vocation, no beneficent aptitude of any sort, and resign oneself to being trivial and superficial. Isabel was resolutely determined not to be superficial. If one should wait expectantly and trustfully, one would find some happy work to his hand. Of course, among her theories, this young lady was not without a collection of opinions on the question of marriage. The first on the list was a conviction that it was very vulgar to think too much about it. From lapsing into a state of eagerness on this point, she earnestly prayed that she might be delivered; she held that a woman ought to be able to make up her life in singleness, and that it was perfectly possible to be happy without the society of a more or less coarse-minded person of another sex. The girl's prayer was very sufficiently answered; something pure and proud that there was in her—something cold and stiff, an unappreciated suitor with a taste for analysis might have called it—had hitherto kept her from any great vanity of conjecture on the subject of possible husbands. Few of the men she saw seemed worth an expenditure of imagination, and it made her smile to think that one of them should present himself as an incentive to hope and a reward of patience. Deep in her soul—it was the deepest thing there—lay a belief that if a certain impulse should be stirred, she could give herself completely; but this image, on the whole, was too formidable to be attractive. Isabel's thoughts hovered about it, but they seldom rested on it long; after a little it ended by frightening her. It often seemed to her that she thought too much about herself; you could have made her blush, any day in the year, by telling her that she was selfish. She was always planning out her own development, desiring her own perfection, observing her own progress. Her nature had for her own imagination a certain garden-like quality, a suggestion of perfume and murmuring boughs, of shady bowers and length-

ening vistas, which made her feel that introspection was after all an exercise in the open air, and that a visit to the recesses of one's mind was harmless when one returned from it with a lapful of roses. But she was often reminded that there were other gardens in the world than those of her virginal soul, and that there were moreover a great many places that were not gardens at all—only dusky, pestiferous tracts, planted thick with ugliness and misery. In the current of that easy eagerness on which she had lately been floating, which had conveyed her to this beautiful old England and might carry her much further still, she often checked herself with the thought of the thousands of people who were less happy than herself—a thought which for the moment made her absorbing happiness appear to her a kind of immodesty. What should one do with the misery of the world in a scheme of the agreeable for oneself? It must be confessed that this question never held her long. She was too young, too impatient to live, too unacquainted with pain. She always returned to her theory that a young woman whom, after all, every one thought clever should begin by getting a general impression of life. This was necessary to prevent mistakes, and after it should be secured, she might make the unfortunate condition of others an object of special attention.

England was a revelation to her, and she found herself as entertained as a child at a pantomime. In her infantine excursions to Europe she had seen only the Continent, and seen it from the nursery window; Paris, not London, was her father's Mecca. The impressions of that time, moreover, had become faint and remote, and the old-world quality in everything that she now saw had all the charm of strangeness. Her uncle's house seemed a picture made real; no refinement of the agreeable was lost upon Isabel; the rich perfection of Gardencourt appealed to her as a spectacle, and

gratified her as a sensation. The large, low rooms, with brown ceilings and dusky corners, the deep embrasures and curious casements, the quiet light on dark, polished panels, the deep greenness outside, that seemed always peeping in, the sense of well-ordered privacy, in the centre of a "property"—a place where sounds were felicitously accidental, where the tread was muffled by the earth itself, and in the thick mild air all shrillness dropped out of conversation—these things were much to the taste of our young lady, whose taste played a considerable part in her emotions. She formed a fast friendship with her uncle, and often sat by his chair when he had had it moved out to the lawn. He passed hours in the open air, sitting placidly with folded hands, like a good old man who had done his work and received his wages, and was trying to grow used to weeks and months made up only of off-days. Isabel amused him more than she suspected—the effect she produced upon people was often different from what she supposed—and he frequently gave himself the pleasure of making her chatter. It was by this term that he qualified her conversation, which had much of the vivacity observable in that of the young ladies of her country, to whom the ear of the world is more directly presented than to their sisters in other lands. Like the majority of American girls, Isabel had been encouraged to express herself; her remarks had been attended to; she had been expected to have emotions and opinions. Many of her opinions had doubtless but a slender value, many of her emotions passed away in the utterance; but they had left a trace in giving her the habit of seeming at least to feel and think, and in imparting moreover to her words, when she was really moved, that maidenly eloquence which so many people had regarded as a sign of superiority. Mr. Touchett used to think that she reminded him of his wife when his wife was in her teens. It was because she was fresh and

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natural and quick to understand, to speak—so many characteristics of her niece—that he had fallen in love with Mrs. Touchett. He never expressed this analogy to the girl herself, however; for if Mrs. Touchett had once been like Isabel, Isabel was not at all like Mrs. Touchett. The old man was full of kindness for her; it was a long time, as he said, since they had had any young life in the house; and our rustling, quickly-moving, clear-voiced heroine was as agreeable to his sense as the sound of flowing water. He wished to do something for her, he wished she would ask something of him. But Isabel asked nothing but questions; it is true that of these she asked a great many. Her uncle had a great fund of answers, though interrogation sometimes came in forms that puzzled him. She questioned him immensely about England, about the British constitution, the English character, the state of politics, the manners and customs of the royal family, the peculiarities of the aristocracy, the way of living and thinking of his neighbours; and in asking to be enlightened on these points she usually inquired whether they correspond with the descriptions in all the books. The old man always looked at her a little, with his fine dry smile, while he smoothed down the shawl that was spread across his legs.

"The books?" he once said; "well, I don't know much about the books. You must ask Ralph about that. I have always ascertained for myself—got my information in the natural form. I never asked many questions even; I just kept quiet and took notice. Of course, I have had very good opportunities—better than what a young lady would naturally have. I am of an inquisitive disposition, though you mightn't think it if you were to watch me; however much you might watch me, I should be watching you more. I have been watching these people for upwards of thirty-five years, and I don't hesitate to say that I have acquired considerable information. It's

a very fine country on the whole—finer perhaps than what we give it credit for on the other side. There are several improvements that I should like to see introduced; but the necessity of them doesn't seem to be generally felt as yet. When the necessity of a thing is generally felt, they usually manage to accomplish it; but they seem to feel pretty comfortable about waiting till then. I certainly feel more at home among them than I expected to when I first came over; I suppose it's because I have had a considerable degree of success. When you are successful, you naturally feel more at home."

"Do you suppose that if I am successful I shall feel at home?" Isabel asked.

"I should think it very probable, and you certainly will be successful. They like American young ladies very much over here; they show them a great deal of kindness. But you mustn't feel too much at home, you know."

"Oh, I am by no means sure I shall like it," said Isabel, somewhat judiciously. "I like the place very much, but I am not sure I shall like the people."

"The people are very good people; especially if you like them."

"I have no doubt they are good," Isabel rejoined; "but are they pleasant in society? They won't rob me nor beat me; but will they make themselves agreeable to me? That's what I like people to do. I don't hesitate to say so, because I always appreciate it. I don't believe they are very nice to girls; they are not nice to them in the novels."

"I don't know about the novels," said Mr. Touchett. "I believe the novels have a great deal of ability, but I don't suppose they are very accurate. We once had a lady who wrote novels staying here; she was a friend of Ralph's and he asked her down. She was very positive, very positive; but she was not the sort of person that you could depend on her

testimony. Too much imagination—I suppose, that was it. She afterwards published a work of fiction in which she was understood to have given a representation—something in the nature of a caricature, as you might say—of my unworthy self. I didn't read it, but Ralph just handed me the book, with the principal passages marked. It was understood to be a description of my conversation; American peculiarities, nasal twang, Yankee notions, stars and stripes. Well, it was not at all accurate; she couldn't have listened very attentively. I had no objection to her giving a report of my conversation, if she liked; but I didn't like the idea that she hadn't taken the trouble to listen to it. Of course I talk like an American—I can't talk like a Hottentot. However I talk, I have made them understand me pretty well over here. But I don't talk like the old gentleman in that lady's novel. He wasn't an American; we wouldn't have him over there! I just mention that fact to show you that they are not always accurate. Of course, as I have no daughters, and as Mrs. Touchett resides in Florence, I haven't had much chance to notice about the young ladies. It sometimes appears as if the young women in the lower class were not very well treated; but I guess their position is better in the upper class."

"Dear me!" Isabel exclaimed; "how many classes have they? About fifty, I suppose."

"Well, I don't know that I ever counted them. I never took much notice of the classes. That's the advantage of being an American here; you don't belong to any class."

"I hope so," said Isabel. "Imagine one's belonging to an English class!"

"Well, I guess some of them are pretty comfortable—especially towards the top. But for me there are only two classes: the people I trust, and the people I don't. Of those two, my dear Isabel, you belong to the first."

"I am much obliged to you," said the young girl, quickly. Her way of

taking compliments seemed sometimes rather dry; she got rid of them as rapidly as possible. But as regards this, she was sometimes misjudged; she was thought insensible to them, whereas in fact she was simply unwilling to show how infinitely they pleased her. To show that was to show too much. "I am sure the English are very conventional," she added.

"They have got everything pretty well fixed," Mr. Touchett admitted. "It's all settled beforehand—they don't leave it to the last moment."

"I don't like to have everything settled beforehand," said the girl. "I like more unexpectedness."

Her uncle seemed amused at her distinctness of preference. "Well, it's settled beforehand that you will have great success," he rejoined. "I suppose you will like that."

"I shall not have success if they are conventional. I am not in the least conventional. I am just the contrary. That's what they won't like."

"No, no, you are all wrong," said the old man. "You can't tell what they will like. They are very inconsistent; that's their principal interest."

"Ah well," said Isabel, standing before her uncle with her hands clasped about the belt of her black dress, and looking up and down the lawn—"that will suit me perfectly!"

VII.

THE two amused themselves, time and again, with talking of the attitude of the British public, as if the young lady had been in a position to appeal to it; but in fact the British public remained for the present profoundly indifferent to Miss Isabel Archer, whose fortune had dropped her, as her cousin said, into the dullest house in England. Her gouty uncle received very little company, and Mrs. Touchett, not having cultivated relations with her husband's neighbours, was not warranted in expecting visits from

them. She had, however, a peculiar taste; she liked to receive cards. For what is usually called social intercourse she had very little relish; but nothing pleased her more than to find her hall-table whitened with oblong morsels of symbolic pasteboard. She flattered herself that she was a very just woman and had mastered the sovereign truth that nothing in this world is got for nothing. She had played no social part as mistress of Gardencourt, and it was not to be supposed that, in the surrounding country, a minute account should be kept of her comings and goings. But it is by no means certain that she did not feel it to be wrong that so little notice was taken of them, and that her failure (really very gratuitous) to make herself important in the neighbourhood had not much to do with the acrimony of her allusions to her husband's adopted country. Isabel presently found herself in the singular situation of defending the British constitution against her aunt; Mrs. Touchett having formed the habit of sticking pins into this venerable instrument. Isabel always felt an impulse to remove the pins; not that she imagined they inflicted any damage on the tough old parchment, but because it seemed to her that her aunt might make better use of her sharpness. She was very critical herself—it was incidental to her age, her sex, and her nationality; but she was very sentimental as well, and there was something in Mrs. Touchett's dryness that set her own moral fountains flowing.

"Now what is your point of view?" she asked of her aunt. "When you criticise everything here, you should have a point of view. Yours doesn't seem to be American—you thought everything over there so disagreeable. When I criticise, I have mine; it's thoroughly American!"

"My dear young lady," said Mrs. Touchett, "there are as many points of view in the world as there are people of sense. You may say that doesn't make them very numerous!

American? Never in the world; that's shockingly narrow. My point of view, thank God, is personal!"

Isabel thought this a better answer than she admitted; it was a tolerable description of her own manner of judging, and it would not have sounded well for her to say it; on the lips of a person less advanced in life, and less enlightened by experience than Mrs. Touchett, such a declaration would savour of immodesty, even of arrogance. She risked it nevertheless, in talking with Ralph, with whom she talked a great deal, and with whom her conversation was of a sort that gave a large licence to violent statements. Her cousin used, as the phrase is, to chaff her; he very soon established with her a reputation for treating everything as a joke, and he was not a man to neglect the privileges such a reputation conferred. She accused him of an odious want of seriousness, of laughing at all things, beginning with herself. Such slender faculty of reverence as he possessed centred wholly upon his father; for the rest, he exercised his wit indiscriminately upon himself, his weak lungs, his useless life, his anomalous mother, his friends (Lord Warburton in especial), his adopted and his native country, his charming new-found cousin. "I keep a band of music in my ante-room," he said once to her. "It has orders to play without stopping; it renders me two excellent services. It keeps the sounds of the world from reaching the private apartments, and it makes the world think that dancing is going on within." It was dance-music indeed that you usually heard when you came within ear-shot of Ralph's band; the liveliest waltzes seemed to float upon the air. Isabel often found herself irritated by this barrier of sound; she would have liked to pass through the ante-room, as her cousin called it, and enter the private apartments. It mattered little that he had assured her that they were a very dismal place; she would have been glad to undertake to sweep them

and set them in order. It was but half-hospitality to let her remain outside; to punish him for which, Isabel administered innumerable taps with the ferrule of her straight young wit. It must be said that her wit was exercised to a large extent in self-defence, for her cousin amused himself with calling her "Columbia," and accusing her of a patriotism so fervid that it scorched. He drew a caricature of her, in which she was represented as a very pretty young woman, dressed, in the height of the prevailing fashion, in the folds of the national banner. Isabel's chief dread in life, at this period of her development, was that she should appear narrow-minded; what she feared next afterwards was that she should be so. But she nevertheless made no scruple of abounding in her cousin's sense, and pretending to sigh for the charms of her native land. She would be as American as it pleased him to regard her, and if he chose to laugh at her, she would give him plenty of occupation. She defended England against his mother, but when Ralph sang its praises, on purpose, as she said, to torment her, she found herself able to differ from him on a variety of points. In reality the quality of this small ripe country seemed as sweet to her as the taste of an October pear; and her satisfaction was at the root of the good spirits which enabled her to take her cousin's chaff and return it in kind. If her good-humour flagged at moments, it was not because she thought herself ill-used, but because she suddenly felt sorry for Ralph. It seemed to her that he was talking as a blind, and had little heart in what he said.

"I don't know what is the matter with you," she said to him once, "but I suspect you are a great humbug."

"That's your privilege," Ralph answered, who had not been used to being so crudely addressed.

"I don't know what you care for; I don't think you care for anything. You don't really care for England

when you praise it; you don't care for America even when you pretend to abuse it."

"I care for nothing but you, dear cousin," said Ralph.

"If I could believe even that, I should be very glad."

"Ah, well, I should hope so!" the young man exclaimed.

Isabel might have believed it, and not have been far from the truth. He thought a great deal about her; she was constantly present to his mind. At a time when his thoughts had been a good deal of a burden to him, her sudden arrival, which had promised nothing and was an open-handed gift of fate, had refreshed and quickened them, given them wings and something to fly for. Poor Ralph for many weeks had been steeped in melancholy; his out-look, habitually sombre, lay under the shadow of a deeper cloud. He had grown anxious about his father, whose gout, hitherto confined to his legs, had begun to ascend into regions more perilous. The old man had been gravely ill in the spring, and the doctors had whispered to Ralph that another attack would be less easy to deal with. Just now he appeared tolerably comfortable, but Ralph could not rid himself of a suspicion that this was a subterfuge of the enemy, who was waiting to take him off his guard. If this manœuvre should succeed, there would be little hope of any great resistance. Ralph had always taken for granted that his father would survive him—that his own name would be the first called. The father and son had been close companions, and the idea of being left alone with the remnant of an alienated life on his hands was not gratifying to the young man, who had always and tacitly counted upon his elder's help in making the best of a poor business. At the prospect of losing his great motive, Ralph was indeed mightily disgusted. If they might die at the same time, it would be all very well; but without the encouragement of his father's society,

he should barely have patience to await his own turn. He had not the incentive of feeling that he was absolutely indispensable to his mother; it was a rule with his mother to have no regrets. He bethought himself, of course, that it had been a small kindness to his father to wish that, of the two, the active, rather than the passive, party should know the pain of loss; he remembered that the old man had always treated his own forecast of an uncompleted career as a clever fallacy, which he should be delighted to discredit, so far as he might, by dying first. But of the two triumphs, that of refuting a sophistical son and that of holding on a while longer to a state of being which, with all abatements, he enjoyed, Ralph deemed it no sin to hope that the latter might be vouchsafed to Mr. Touchett.

These were nice questions, but Isabel's arrival put a stop to his puzzling over them. It even suggested that there might be a compensation for the intolerable ennui of surviving his genial sire. He wondered whether he were falling in love with this spontaneous young woman from Albany; but he decided that on the whole he was not. After he had known her for a week, he quite made up his mind to this, and every day he felt a little more sure. Lord Warburton had been right about her; she was a thoroughly interesting woman. Ralph wondered how Lord Warburton had found it out so soon; and then he said it was only another proof of his friend's high abilities, which he had always greatly admired. If his cousin were to be nothing more than an entertainment to him, Ralph was conscious that she was an entertainment of a high order. "A character like that," he said to himself, "is the finest thing in nature. It is finer than the finest work of art—than a Greek bas-relief, than a great Titian, than a Gothic cathedral. It is very pleasant to be so well-treated where one least looked for it.

I had never been more blue, more bored, than for a week before she came; I had never expected less that something agreeable would happen. Suddenly I receive a Titian, by the post, to hang on my wall—a Greek bas-relief to stick over my chimney-piece. The key of a beautiful edifice is thrust into my hand, and I am told to walk in and admire. My poor boy, you have been sadly ungrateful, and now you had better keep very quiet, and never grumble again." The sentiment of these reflections was very just; but it was not exactly true that Ralph Touchett had had a key put into his hand. His cousin was a very brilliant girl, who would take, as he said, a good deal of knowing; but she needed the knowing, and his attitude with regard to her, though it was contemplative and critical, was not judicial. He surveyed the edifice from the outside, and admired it greatly; he looked in at the windows, and received an impression of proportions equally fair. But he felt that he saw it only by glimpses, and that he had not yet stood under the roof;—the door was fastened, and though he had keys in his pocket, he had a conviction that none of them would fit. She was intelligent and generous; it was a fine free nature; but what was she going to do with herself? This question was irregular, for with most women one had no occasion to ask it. Most women did with themselves nothing at all; they waited, in attitudes more or less gracefully, passive for a man to come along and furnish them with a destiny. Isabel's originality was that she gave one an impression of having intuitions of her own. "Whenever she executes them," said Ralph, "may I be there to see!"

It devolved upon him of course to do the honours of the place. Mr. Touchett was confined to his chair, and his wife's position was that of a rather grim visitor; so that in the line of conduct that opened itself to Ralph, duty and inclination were

harmoniously mingled. He was not a great walker, but he strolled about the grounds with his cousin—a pastime for which the weather remained favourable with a persistency not allowed for in Isabel's somewhat lugubrious prevision of the climate; and in the long afternoons, of which the length was but the measure of her gratified eagerness, they took a boat on the river, the dear little river, as Isabel called it, when the opposite shore seemed still a part of the foreground of the landscape; or drove over the country in a phaeton—a low, capacious, thick-wheeled phaeton, formerly much used by Mr. Touchett, but which he had now ceased to enjoy. Isabel enjoyed it largely, and, handling the reins in a manner which approved itself to the groom as “knowing,” was never weary of driving her uncle's capital horses through winding lanes and byways full of the rural incidents she had confidently expected to find, past cottages thatched and timbered, past ale-houses latticed and sanded, past patches of ancient common and glimpses of empty parks, between hedgerows made thick by midsummer. When they reached home, they usually found that tea had been served upon the lawn, and that Mrs. Touchett had not absolved herself from the obligation of handing her husband his cup. But the two for the most part sat silent; the old man with his head back and his eyes closed, his wife occupied with her knitting, and wearing that appearance of extraordinary meditation with which some ladies contemplate the movement of their needles.

One day, however, a visitor had arrived. The two young people, after spending an hour upon the river, strolled back to the house and perceived Lord Warburton sitting under the trees and engaged in conversation, of which even at a distance the desultory character was appreciable, with Mrs. Touchett. He had driven over from his own place with a portmanteau, and had asked, as the father

and son had often invited him to do, for a dinner and a lodging. Isabel, seeing him for half an hour on the day of her arrival, had discovered in this brief space that she liked him; he had made indeed a tolerably vivid impression on her mind, and she had thought of him several times. She had hoped that she should see him again—hoped too that she should see a few others. Gardencourt was not dull; the place itself was so delightful, her uncle was such a perfection of an uncle, and Ralph was so unlike any cousin she had ever encountered—her view of cousins being rather monotonous. Then her impressions were still so fresh and so quickly renewed that there was as yet hardly a sense of vacancy in the prospect. But Isabel had need to remind herself that she was interested in human nature and that her foremost hope in coming abroad had been that she should see a great many people. When Ralph said to her, as he had done several times—“I wonder you find this endurable; you ought to see some of the neighbours and some of our friends—because we have really got a few, though you would never suppose it”—when he offered to invite what he called a “lot of people,” and make the young girl acquainted with English society, she encouraged the hospitable impulse and promised, in advance, to be delighted. Little, however, for the present, had come of Ralph's offers, and it may be confided to the reader that, if the young man delayed to carry them out, it was because he found the labour of entertaining his cousin by no means so severe as to require extraneous help. Isabel had spoken to him very often about “specimens”; it was a word that played a considerable part in her vocabulary; she had given him to understand that she wished to see as many specimens as possible, and specimens of everything.

“Well now, there's a specimen,” he said to her, as they walked up

from the river-side, and he recognised Lord Warburton.

"A specimen of what?" asked the girl.

"A specimen of an English gentleman."

"Do you mean they are all like him?"

"Oh no; they are not all like him."

"He's a favourable specimen, then," said Isabel; "because I am sure he is good."

"Yes, he is very good. And he is very fortunate."

The fortunate Lord Warburton exchanged a handshake with our heroine, and hoped she was very well. "But I needn't ask that," he said, "since you have been handling the oars."

"I have been rowing a little," Isabel answered; "but how should you know it?"

"Oh, I know *he* doesn't row; he's too lazy," said his lordship, indicating Ralph Touchett, with a laugh.

"He has a good excuse for his laziness," Isabel rejoined, lowering her voice a little.

"Ah, he has a good excuse for everything!" cried Lord Warburton, still with his deep, agreeable laugh.

"My excuse for not rowing is that my cousin rows so well," said Ralph. "She does everything well. She touches nothing that she doesn't adorn!"

"It makes one want to be touched, Miss Archer," Lord Warburton declared.

"Be touched in the right sense, and you will never look the worse for it," said Isabel, who, if it pleased her to hear it said that her accomplishments were numerous, was happily able to reflect that such complacency was not the indication of a feeble mind, inasmuch as there were several things in which she excelled. Her desire to think well of herself always needed to be supported by proof; though it is possible that this fact is not the sign of a milder egotism.

Lord Warburton not only spent the night at Gardencourt but he was persuaded to remain over the second day; and when the second day was ended, he determined to postpone his departure till the morrow. During this period he addressed much of his conversation to Isabel, who accepted this evidence of his esteem with a very good grace. She found herself liking him extremely; the first impression he had made upon her was pleasant, but at the end of an evening spent in his society she thought him quite one of the most laudable persons she had met. She retired to rest with a sense of good fortune, with a quickened consciousness of the pleasantness of life. "It's very nice to know two such charming people as those," she said, meaning by "those" her cousin and her cousin's friend. It must be added, moreover, that an incident had occurred which might have seemed to put her good humour to the test. Mr. Touchett went to bed at half-past nine o'clock, but his wife remained in the drawing-room with the other members of the party. She prolonged her vigil for something less than an hour, and then rising, she said to Isabel that it was time they should bid the gentlemen good-night. Isabel had as yet no desire to go to bed; the occasion wore, to her sense, a festive character, and feasts were not in the habit of terminating so early. So, without further thought, she replied, very simply—

"Need I go, dear aunt? I will come up in half an hour."

"It's impossible I should wait for you," Mrs. Touchett answered.

"Ah, you needn't wait! Ralph will light my candle," said Isabel, smiling.

"I will light your candle; do let me light your candle, Miss Archer!" Lord Warburton exclaimed. "Only I beg it shall not be before midnight!"

Mrs. Touchett fixed her bright little eyes upon him for a moment, and then transferred them to her niece.

"You can't stay alone with the gentlemen. You are not—you are not at Albany, my dear!"

Isabel rose, blushing.

"I wish I were!" she said.

"Oh, I say, mother!" Ralph broke out.

"My dear Mrs. Touchett!" Lord Warburton murmured.

"I didn't make your country, my lord," Mrs. Touchett said majestically. "I must take it as I find it!"

"Can't I stay with my own cousin?" Isabel inquired.

"I am not aware that Lord Warburton is your cousin!"

"Perhaps I had better go to bed," the nobleman exclaimed. "That will arrange it."

Mrs. Touchett gave a little look of despair, and sat down again.

"Oh, if it's necessary, I will stay up till midnight," she said.

Ralph meanwhile handed Isabel her candlestick. He had been watching her; it had seemed to him that her temper was stirred—an accident that might be interesting. But if he had expected an exhibition of temper, he was disappointed, for the girl simply laughed a little, nodded good-night, and withdrew, accompanied by her aunt. For himself he was annoyed at his mother, though he thought she was right. Above stairs, the two ladies separated at Mrs. Touchett's door. Isabel had said nothing on her way up.

"Of course you are displeased at my interfering with you," said Mrs. Touchett.

Isabel reflected a moment.

"I am not displeased, but I am surprised—and a good deal puzzled. Was it not proper I should remain in the drawing-room?"

"Not in the least. Young girls here don't sit alone with the gentlemen late at night."

"You were very right to tell me then," said Isabel. "I don't understand it, but I am very glad to know it."

"I shall always tell you," her aunt

answered, "whenever I see you taking what seems to be too much liberty."

"Pray do; but I don't say I shall always think your remonstrance just."

"Very likely not. You are too fond of your liberty."

"Yes, I think I am very fond of it. But I always want to know the things one shouldn't do."

"So as to do them?" asked her aunt.

"So as to choose," said Isabel.

VIII.

As she was much interested in the picturesque, Lord Warburton ventured to express a hope that she would come some day and see his house, which was a very curious old place. He extracted from Mrs. Touchett a promise that she would bring her niece to Lockleigh, and Ralph signified his willingness to attend upon the ladies if his father should be able to spare him. Lord Warburton assured our heroine that in the meantime his sisters would come and see her. She knew something about his sisters, having interrogated him, during the hours they spent together while he was at Gardencourt, on many points connected with his family. When Isabel was interested, she asked a great many questions, and as her companion was a copious talker, she asked him on this occasion by no means in vain. He told her that he had four sisters and two brothers, and had lost both his parents. The brothers and sisters were very good people—"not particularly clever, you know," he said, "but simple and respectable and trustworthy," and he was so good as to hope that Miss Archer should know them well. One of the brothers was in the Church, settled in the parsonage at Lockleigh, which was rather a largeish parish, and was an excellent fellow in spite of his thinking differently from himself on every conceivable topic. And then Lord Warburton mentioned some of the opinions held by his

brother, which were opinions that Isabel had often heard expressed and that she supposed to be entertained by a considerable portion of the human family. Many of them, indeed, she supposed she had held herself, till he assured her that she was quite mistaken, that it was really impossible, that she had doubtless imagined she entertained them, but that she might depend that, if she thought them over a little, she would find they were awful rubbish. When she answered that she had already thought several of them over very attentively, he declared that she was only another example of what he had often been struck with—the fact that, of all the people in the world, the Americans were most plagued in misty superstitions. They were rank Tories and inquisitors, every one of them; there were no conservatives like American conservatives. Her uncle there and her cousin were both proof; nothing could be more medieval than many of their views; they had ideas that people in England nowadays were ashamed to confess to; and they had the impudence, moreover, said his lordship, laughing, to pretend they know more about the needs and dangers of this poor, dear, stupid old England than he who was born in it, and owned a considerable part of it—the more shame to him! From all of which Isabel gathered that Lord Warburton was a nobleman of the newest pattern, a reformer, a radical, a contemner of ancient ways. His other brother, who who was in the army in India, was rather wild and pig-headed, and had not been of much use as yet but to make debts for Warburton to pay—one of the most precious privileges of an elder brother. “I don’t think I will pay any more,” said Warburton; “he lives a monstrous deal better than I do, enjoys unheard of luxuries, and thinks himself a much finer gentleman than I. As I am a consistent radical, I go in only for equality; I don’t go in for the superiority of the younger brothers.” Two of his four sisters, the

second and fourth, were married, one of them having done very well, as they said, the other only so-so. The husband of the elder, Lord Haycock, was a very good fellow, but unfortunately a horrid Tory; and his wife, like all good English wives, was worse than her husband. The other had espoused a smallish squire in Norfolk, and, though she was married only the other day, had already five children. This information and much more Lord Warburton imparted to his young American listener, taking pains to make many things clear, and to lay bare to her apprehension the peculiarities of English life. Isabel was often amused at his explicitness and at the small allowance he seemed to make either for her own experience or for her imagination. “He thinks I am a barbarian,” she said, “and that I have never seen forks and spoons;” and she used to ask him artless questions for the pleasure of hearing him answer seriously. Then, when he had fallen into the trap—“It’s a pity you can’t see me in my war-paint and feathers,” she remarked; “if I had known how kind you are to the poor savages, I would have brought over my national costume!” Lord Warburton had travelled through the United States, and knew much more about them than Isabel; he was so good as to say that America was the most charming country in the world, but his recollections of it appeared to encourage the idea that Americans in England would need to have a great many things explained to them. “If I had only had you to explain things to me in America!” he said. “I was rather puzzled in your country; in fact I was quite bewildered, and the trouble was that the explanations only puzzled me more. You know I think they often gave me the wrong ones on purpose; they are rather clever about that over there. But when I explain, you can trust me; about what I tell you there is no mistake.” There was no mistake at least about his being very intelligent and cultivated, and

knowing almost everything in the world. Although he said the most interesting and entertaining things, Isabel perceived that he never said them to exhibit himself, and though he had a great good fortune, he was as far as possible from making a merit of it. He had enjoyed the best things of life, but they had not spoiled his sense of proportion. His composition was a mixture of good-humoured manly force and a modesty that at times was almost boyish; the sweet and wholesome savour of which—it was as agreeable as something tasted—lost nothing from the addition of a tone of kindness which was not boyish, inasmuch as there was a good deal of reflection and of conscience in it.

"I like your specimen English gentleman very much," Isabel said to Ralph, after Lord Warburton had gone.

"I like him too—I love him well," said Ralph. "But I pity him more."

Isabel stared.

"Why, that seems to me his only fault—that one couldn't pity him a little. He appears to have everything, to know everything, to be everything!"

"Oh, he's in a bad way," Ralph insisted.

"I suppose you don't mean in health?"

"No, as to that, he is detestably robust. What I mean is that he is a man with a great position, who is playing all sorts of tricks with it. He doesn't take himself seriously."

"Does he regard himself as a joke?"

"Much worse; he regards himself as an imposition—as an abuse."

"Well, perhaps he is," said Isabel.

"Perhaps he is—though on the whole I don't think so. But in that case, what is more pitiable than a sentient, self-conscious abuse, planted by other hands, deeply rooted, but aching with a sense of its injustice? For me, I could take Lord Warburton very seriously; he occupies a position that appeals to my imagination. Great

responsibilities, great opportunities, great consideration, great wealth, great power, a natural share in the public affairs of a great country. But he is all in a muddle about himself, his position, his power, and everything else. He is the victim of a critical age; he has ceased to believe in himself, and he doesn't know what to believe in. When I attempt to tell him (because if I were he, I know very well what I should believe in), he calls me an old-fashioned and narrow-minded person. I believe he seriously thinks me an awful Philistine; he says I don't understand my time. I understand it certainly better than he, who can neither abolish himself as a nuisance nor maintain himself as an institution."

"He doesn't look very wretched," Isabel observed.

"Possibly not; though, being a man of imagination, I think he often has uncomfortable hours. But what is it to say of a man of his opportunities that he is not miserable? Besides, I believe he is."

"I don't," said Isabel.

"Well," her cousin rejoined, "if he is not, he ought to be!"

In the afternoon she spent an hour with her uncle on the lawn, where the old man sat, as usual, with his shawl over his legs and his large cup of diluted tea in his hands. In the course of conversation he asked her what she thought of their late visitor.

"I think he is charming," Isabel answered.

"He's a fine fellow," said Mr. Touchett, "but I don't recommend you to fall in love with him."

"I shall not do it then; I shall never fall in love but on your recommendation. Moreover," Isabel added, "my cousin gives me a rather sad account of Lord Warburton."

"Oh, indeed? I don't know what there may be to say, but you must remember that Ralph is rather fanciful."

"He thinks Lord Warburton is too radical—or not radical enough! I

don't quite understand which," said Isabel.

The old man shook his head slowly, smiled, and put down his cup.

"I don't know which, either. He goes very far, but it is quite possible he doesn't go far enough. He seems to want to do away with a good many things, but he seems to want to remain himself. I suppose that is natural; but it is rather inconsistent."

"Oh, I hope he will remain himself," said Isabel. "If he were to be done away with, his friends would miss him sadly."

"Well," said the old man, "I guess he'll stay and amuse his friends. I should certainly miss him very much here at Gardencourt. He always amuses me when he comes over, and I think he amuses himself as well. There is a considerable number like him, round in society; they are very fashionable just now. I don't know what they are trying to do—whether they are trying to get up a revolution; I hope at any rate they will put it off till after I am gone. You see they want to disestablish everything; but I'm a pretty big landowner here, and I don't want to be disestablished. I wouldn't have come over if I had thought they were going to behave like that," Mr. Touchett went on, with expanding hilarity. "I came over because I thought England was a safe country. I call it a regular fraud, if they are going to introduce any considerable changes; there'll be a large number disappointed in that case."

"Oh, I do hope they will make a revolution!" Isabel exclaimed. "I should delight in seeing a revolution!"

"Let me see," said her uncle, with a humorous intention; "I forget whether you are a liberal or a conservative. I have heard you take such opposite views."

"I am both. I think I am a little of everything. In a revolution—after it was well begun—I think I should be a conservative. One sympathises

more with them, and they have a chance to behave so picturesquely."

"I don't know that I understand what you mean by behaving picturesquely, but it seems to me that you do that always, my dear."

"Oh, you lovely man, if I could believe that!" the girl interrupted.

"I am afraid, after all, you won't have the pleasure of seeing a revolution here just now," Mr. Touchett went on. "If you want to see one, you must pay us a long visit. You see, when you come to the point, it wouldn't suit them to be taken at their word."

"Of whom are you speaking?"

"Well, I mean Lord Warburton and his friends—the radicals of the upper class. Of course I only know the way it strikes me. They talk about changes, but I don't think they quite realise. You and I, you know, we know what it is to have lived under democratic institutions; I always thought them very comfortable, but I was used to them from the first. But then, I ain't a lord; you're a lady, my dear, but I ain't a lord. Now, over here, I don't think it quite comes home to them. It's a matter of every day and every hour, and I don't think many of them would find it as pleasant as what they've got. Of course if they want to try, it's their own business; but I expect they won't try very hard!"

"Don't you think they are sincere?" Isabel asked.

"Well, they are very conscientious," Mr. Touchett allowed; "but it seems as if they took it out in theories, mostly. Their radical views are a kind of amusement; they have got to have some amusement, and they might have coarser tastes than that. You see they are very luxurious, and these progressive ideas are about their biggest luxury. They make them feel moral, and yet they don't affect their position. They think a great deal of their position; don't let one of them ever persuade you he doesn't, for if you were to proceed on that basis, you would

find that you had made a great mistake."

Isabel followed her uncle's argument, which he unfolded with his mild, reflective, optimistic accent, most attentively, and though she was unacquainted with the British aristocracy, she found it in harmony with her general impressions of human nature. But she felt moved to put in a protest on Lord Warburton's behalf.

"I don't believe Lord Warburton's a humbug," she said; "I don't care what the others are. I should like to see Lord Warburton put to the test."

"Heaven deliver me from my friends!" Mr. Touchett answered. "Lord Warburton is a very amiable young man—a very fine young man. He has a hundred thousand a year. He owns fifty thousand acres of the soil of this little island. He has half a dozen houses to live in. He has a seat in Parliament as I have one at my own dinner-table. He has very cultivated tastes—cares for literature, for art, for science, for charming young ladies. The most cultivated is his taste for the new views. It affords him a great deal of entertainment—more perhaps than anything else, except the young ladies. His old house over there—what does he call it, Lockleigh?—is very attractive; but I don't think it is as pleasant as this. That doesn't matter, however—he has got so many others. His views don't hurt any one, as far as I can see; they certainly don't hurt himself. And if there were to be a revolution, he would come off very easily; they wouldn't touch him, they would leave him as he is; he is too much liked."

"Ah, he couldn't be a martyr even if he wished!" Isabel exclaimed. "That's a very poor position!"

"He will never be a martyr unless you make him one," said the old man.

Isabel shook her head; there might have been something laughable in the fact that she did it with a touch of sadness.

"I shall never make a martyr!"

"You will never be one, I hope."

"I hope not. But you don't pity Lord Warburton, then, as Ralph does?"

Her uncle looked at her a while, with genial acuteness.

"Yes, I do, after all."

IX.

THE two Misses Molyneux, this nobleman's sisters, came presently to call upon her, and Isabel took a fancy to the young ladies, who appeared to her to have a very original stamp. It is true that, when she spoke of them to her cousin as original, he declared that no epithet could be less applicable than this to the two Misses Molyneux, for that there were fifty thousand young women in England who exactly resembled them. Deprived of this advantage, however, Isabel's visitors retained that of an extreme sweetness and shyness of demeanour, and of having, as she thought, the kindest eyes in the world.

"They are not morbid, at any rate, whatever they are," our heroine said to herself; and she deemed this a great charm, for two or three of the friends of her girlhood had been regrettably open to the charge (they would have been so nice without it), to say nothing of Isabel's having occasionally suspected that it might become a fault of her own. The Misses Molyneux were not in their first youth, but they had bright, fresh complexions, and something of the smile of childhood. Their eyes, which Isabel admired so much, were quiet and contented, and their figures, of a generous roundness, were encased in seal-skin jackets. Their friendliness was great, so great that they were almost embarrassed to show it; they seemed somewhat afraid of the young lady from the other side of the world, and rather looked than spoke their good wishes. But they made it clear to her that they hoped she would come to lunch at Lockleigh, where they lived with their

brother, and then they might see her very, very often. They wondered whether she wouldn't come over some day and sleep; they were expecting some people on the twenty-ninth, and perhaps she would come while the people were there.

"I'm afraid it isn't any one very remarkable," said the elder sister; "but I daresay you will take us as you find us."

"I shall find you delightful; I think you are enchanting just as you are," replied Isabel, who was often very liberal in her expression of esteem.

Her visitors blushed, and her cousin told her, after they were gone, that, if she said such things to those poor girls, they would think she was quizzing them; he was sure it was the first time they had been called enchanting.

"I can't help it," Isabel answered. "I think it's lovely to be so quiet, and reasonable, and satisfied. I should like to be like that."

"Heaven forbid!" cried Ralph, with ardour.

"I mean to try and imitate them," said Isabel. "I want very much to see them at home."

She had this pleasure a few days later, when, with Ralph and his mother, she drove over to Lockleigh. She found the Misses Molyneux sitting in a vast drawing-room (she perceived afterwards it was one of several), in a wilderness of faded chintz; they were dressed on this occasion in black velvet. Isabel liked them even better at home than she had done at Gardencourt, and was more than ever struck with the fact that they were not morbid. It had seemed to her before that, if they had a fault, it was a want of vivacity; but she presently saw that they were capable of deep emotion. Before lunch she was alone with them, for some time, on one side of the room, while Lord Warburton, at a distance, talked to Mrs. Touchett.

"Is it true that your brother is

such a great radical?" Isabel asked. She knew it was true, but we have seen that her interest in human nature was keen, and she had a desire to draw the Misses Molyneux out.

"Oh dear, yes; he's immensely advanced," said Mildred, the younger sister.

"At the same time, Warburton is very reasonable," Miss Molyneux observed.

Isabel watched him a moment, at the other side of the room; he was evidently trying hard to make himself agreeable to Mrs. Touchett. Ralph was playing with one of the dogs before the fire which the temperature of an English August, in the ancient, spacious room, had not made an impertinence. "Do you suppose your brother is sincere?" Isabel inquired with a smile.

"Oh, he must be, you know!" Mildred exclaimed, quickly; while the elder sister gazed at our heroine in silence.

"Do you think he would stand the test?"

"The test?"

"I mean, for instance, having to give up all this!"

"Having to give up Lockleigh?" said Miss Molyneux, finding her voice.

"Yes, and the other places; what are they called?"

The two sisters exchanged an almost frightened glance. "Do you mean—do you mean on account of the expense?" the younger one asked.

"I daresay he might let one or two of his houses," said the other.

"Let them for nothing?" Isabel inquired.

"I can't fancy his giving up his property!" said Miss Molyneux.

"Ah, I am afraid he is an impostor!" Isabel exclaimed. "Don't you think it's a false position?"

Her companions, evidently, were rapidly getting bewildered. "My brother's position?" Miss Molyneux inquired.

"It's thought a very good position,"

said the younger sister. "It's the first position in the county."

"I am afraid you think me very irreverent," Isabel took occasion to observe. "I suppose you revere your brother, and are rather afraid of him."

"Of course one looks up to one's brother," said Miss Molyneux, simply.

"If you do that, he must be very good—because you, evidently, are very good."

"He is most kind. It will never be known, the good he does."

"His ability is known," Mildred added; "every one thinks it's immense."

"Oh, I can see that," said Isabel. "But if I were he, I should wish to be a conservative. I should wish to keep everything."

"I think one ought to be liberal," Mildred argued, gently. "We have always been so, even from the earliest times."

"Ah well," said Isabel, "you have made a great success of it; I don't wonder you like it. I see you are very fond of crewels."

When Lord Warburton showed her the house, after lunch, it seemed to her a matter of course that it should be a noble picture. Within, it had been a good deal modernised—some of its best points had lost their purity; but as they saw it from the gardens, a stout, grey pile, of the softest, deepest, most weather-fretted hue, rising from a broad, still moat, it seemed to Isabel a castle in a fairy tale. The day was cool and rather lustreless; the first note of autumn had been struck; and the watery sunshine rested on the walls in blurred and desultory gleams, washing them, as it were, in places tenderly chosen, where the ache of antiquity was keenest. Her host's brother, the Vicar, had come to lunch, and Isabel had had five minutes' talk with him—time enough to institute a search for theological characteristics and give it up as vain. The characteristics of the

Vicar of Lockleigh were a big, athletic figure, a candid, natural countenance, a capacious appetite, and a tendency to abundant laughter. Isabel learned afterwards from her cousin that, before taking orders, he had been a mighty wrestler, and that he was still, on occasion—in the privacy of the family circle as it were—quite capable of flooring his man. Isabel liked him—she was in the mood for liking everything; but her imagination was a good deal taxed to think of him as a source of spiritual aid. The whole party, on leaving lunch, went to walk in the grounds; but Lord Warburton exercised some ingenuity in engaging his youngest visitor in a stroll somewhat apart from the others.

"I wish you to see the place properly, seriously," he said. "You can't do so if your attention is distracted by irrelevant gossip." His own conversation (though he told Isabel a good deal about the house, which had a very curious history) was not purely archaeological; he reverted at intervals to matters more personal—matters personal to the young lady as well as to himself. But at last, after a pause of some duration, returning for a moment to their ostensible theme, "Ah, well," he said, "I am very glad indeed you like the old house. I wish you could see more of it—that you could stay here a while. My sisters have taken an immense fancy to you—if that would be any inducement."

"There is no want of inducements," Isabel answered; "but I am afraid I can't make engagements. I am quite in my aunt's hands."

"Ah, excuse me if I say I don't exactly believe that. I am pretty sure you can do whatever you want."

"I am sorry if I make that impression on you; I don't think it's a nice impression to make."

"It has the merit of permitting me to hope." And Lord Warburton paused a moment.

"To hope what?"

"That in future I may see you often."

"Ah," said Isabel, "to enjoy that pleasure, I needn't be so terribly emancipated!"

"Doubtless not; and yet at the same time I don't think your uncle likes me."

"You are very much mistaken. I have heard him speak very highly of you."

"I am glad you have talked about me," said Lord Warburton. "But, all the same, I don't think he would like me to keep coming to Gardencourt."

"I can't answer for my uncle's tastes," the girl rejoined, "though I ought, as far as possible, to take them into account. But, for myself, I shall be very glad to see you."

"Now that's what I like to hear you say! I am charmed when you say that."

"You are easily charmed, my lord," said Isabel.

"No, I am not easily charmed!" And then he stopped a moment. "But you have charmed me, Miss Archer," he added.

These words were uttered with an indefinable sound which startled the girl; it struck her as the prelude to something grave; she had heard the sound before and she recognised it. She had no wish, however, that for the moment such a prelude should have a sequel, and she said, as gaily as possible and as quickly as an appreciable degree of agitation would allow her, "I am afraid there is no prospect of my being able to come here again."

"Never?" said Lord Warburton.

"I won't say 'never'; I should feel very melodramatic."

"May I come and see you then some day next week?"

"Most assuredly. What is there to prevent it?"

"Nothing tangible. But with you I never feel safe. I have a sort of sense that you are always judging people."

"You don't of necessity lose by that."

"It is very kind of you to say so; but even if I gain, stern justice is not what I most love. Is Mrs. Touchett going to take you abroad?"

"I hope so."

"Is England not good enough for you?"

"That's a very Machiavellian speech; it doesn't deserve an answer. I want very much to see foreign lands as well."

"Then you will go on judging, I suppose."

"Enjoying, I hope, too."

"Yes, that's what you enjoy most; I can't make out what you are up to," said Lord Warburton. "You strike me as having mysterious purposes—vast designs!"

"You are so good as to have a theory about me which I don't at all fill out. Is there anything mysterious in a purpose entertained and executed every year, in the most public manner, by fifty thousand of my fellow-countrymen—the purpose of improving one's mind by foreign travel?"

"You can't improve your mind, Miss Archer," her companion declared. "It's already a most formidable instrument. It looks down on us all; it despises us."

"Despises you? You are making fun of me," said Isabel, seriously.

"Well, you think us picturesque—that's the same thing. I won't be thought picturesque, to begin with; I am not so in the least. I protest."

"That protest is one of the most picturesque things I have ever heard," Isabel answered, with a smile.

Lord Warburton was silent a moment. "You judge only from the outside—you don't care!" he said presently. "You only care to amuse yourself!" The note she had heard in his voice a moment before re-appeared, and mixed with it now was an audible strain of bitterness—a bitterness so abrupt and inconsequent that the girl felt a painful alarm.

She had often heard that the English were a highly eccentric people; and she had even read in some ingenious author that they were, at bottom, the most romantic of races. Was Lord Warburton suddenly turning romantic—was he going to make a scene, in his own house, only the third time they had met? She was reassured, quickly enough, by her sense of his great good manners, which was not impaired by the fact that he had already touched the furthest limit of good taste in expressing his admiration of a young lady who had confided in his hospitality. She was right in trusting to his good manners, for he presently went on, laughing a little, and without a trace of the accent that had discomposed her—"I don't mean, of course, that you amuse yourself with trifles. You select great materials; the foibles, the afflictions of human nature, the peculiarities of nations!"

"As regards that," said Isabel, "I should find in my own nation entertainment for a lifetime. But we have a long drive, and my aunt will soon wish to start." She turned back toward the others, and Lord Warburton walked beside her in silence. But before they reached the others—"I shall come and see you next week," he said.

She had received an appreciable shock, but as it died away, she felt that she could not pretend to herself that it was altogether a painful one. Nevertheless, she made answer to this declaration, coldly enough, "Just as you please." And her coldness was not coquetry—a quality which she possessed in a much smaller degree than would have seemed probable to many critics; it came from a certain fear.

X.

THE day after her visit to Lockleigh she received a note from her friend, Miss Stackpole—a note of which the

envelope, exhibiting in conjunction the postmark of Liverpool and the neat calligraphy of the quick-fingered Henrietta, caused her some liveliness of emotion. "Here I am, my lovely friend," Miss Stackpole wrote; "I managed to get off at last. I decided only the night before I left New York—the *Interviewer* having come round to my figure. I put a few things into a bag, like a veteran journalist, and came down to the steamer in a street-car. Where are you, and where can we meet? I suppose you are visiting at some castle or other, and have already acquired the correct accent. Perhaps, even, you have married a lord; I almost hope you have, for I want some introductions to the first people, and shall count on you for a few. The *Interviewer* wants some light on the nobility. My first impressions (of the people at large) are not rose-coloured; but I wish to talk them over with you, and you know that whatever I am, at least I am not superficial. I have also something very particular to tell you. Do appoint a meeting as quickly as you can; come to London (I should like so much to visit the sights with you), or else let me come to you, *wherever you are*. I will do so with pleasure; for you know everything interests me, and I wish to see as much as possible of the inner life."

Isabel did not show this letter to her uncle; but she acquainted him with its purport, and, as she expected, he begged her instantly to assure Miss Stackpole, in his name, that he should be delighted to receive her at Gardencourt. "Though she is a literary lady," he said, "I suppose that, being an American, she won't reproduce me, as that other one did. She has seen others like me."

"She has seen no other so delightful!" Isabel answered; but she was not altogether at ease about Henrietta's reproductive instincts, which belonged to that side of her friend's character which she viewed with least

complacency. She wrote to Miss Stackpole, however, that she would be very welcome under Mr. Touchett's roof; and this enterprising young woman lost no time in signifying her intention of arriving. She had gone up to London, and it was from the metropolis that she took the train for the station nearest to Gardencourt, where Isabel and Ralph were in waiting to receive the visitor.

"Shall I love her, or shall I hate her?" asked Ralph, while they stood on the platform, before the advent of the train.

"Which ever you do will matter very little to her," said Isabel. "She doesn't care a straw what men think of her."

"As a man I am bound to dislike her, then. She must be a kind of monster. Is she very ugly?"

"No, she is decidedly pretty."

"A female interviewer—a reporter in petticoats? I am very curious to see her," Ralph declared.

"It is very easy to laugh at her, but it is not easy to be as brave as she."

"I should think not; interviewing requires bravery. Do you suppose she will interview me?"

"Never in the world. She will not think you of enough importance."

"You will see," said Ralph. "She will send a description of us all, including Bunchie, to her newspaper."

"I shall ask her not to," Isabel answered.

"You think she is capable of it, then."

"Perfectly."

"And yet you have made her your bosom friend!"

"I have not made her my bosom friend; but I like her, in spite of her faults."

"Ah, well," said Ralph, "I am afraid I shall dislike her, in spite of her merits."

"You will probably fall in love with her at the end of three days."

"And have my love-letters pub-

lished in the *Interviewer*? Never!" cried the young man.

The train presently arrived, and Miss Stackpole, promptly descending, proved to be, as Isabel had said, decidedly pretty. She was a fair, plump person, of medium stature, with a round face, a small mouth, a delicate complexion, a bunch of light brown ringlets at the back of her head, and a peculiarly open, surprised-looking eye. The most striking point in her appearance was the remarkable fixedness of this organ, which rested without impudence or defiance, but as if in conscientious exercise of a natural right, upon every object it happened to encounter. It rested in this manner upon Ralph himself, who was somewhat disconcerted by Miss Stackpole's gracious and comfortable aspect, which seemed to indicate that it would not be so easy as he had assumed to disapprove of her. She was very well dressed, in fresh, dove-coloured draperies, and Ralph saw at a glance that she was scrupulously, fastidiously neat. From top to toe she carried not an ink-stain. She spoke in a clear, high voice—a voice not rich, but loud, though after she had taken her place, with her companions, in Mr. Touchett's carriage, she struck him, rather to his surprise, as not an abundant talker. She answered the inquiries made of her by Isabel, however, and in which the young man ventured to join, with a great deal of precision and distinctness; and later, in the library at Gardencourt, when she had made the acquaintance of Mr. Touchett (his wife not having thought it necessary to appear), did more to give the measure of her conversational powers.

"Well, I should like to know whether you consider yourselves American or English," she said. "If once I knew, I could talk to you accordingly."

"Talk to us anyhow, and we shall be thankful," Ralph answered, liberally.

She fixed her eyes upon him, and there was something in their character that reminded him of large, polished buttons; he seemed to see the reflection of surrounding objects upon the pupil. The expression of a button is not usually deemed human, but there was something in Miss Stackpole's gaze that made him, as he was a very modest man, feel vaguely embarrassed and uncomfortable. This sensation, it must be added, after he had spent a day or two in her company, sensibly diminished, though it never wholly disappeared. "I don't suppose that you are going to undertake to persuade me that *you* are an American," she said.

"To please you, I will be an Englishman, I will be a Turk!"

"Well, if you can change about that way, you are very welcome," Miss Stackpole rejoined.

"I am sure you understand everything, and that differences of nationality are no barrier to you," Ralph went on.

Miss Stackpole gazed at him still. "Do you mean the foreign languages?"

"The languages are nothing. I mean the spirit—the genius."

"I am not sure that I understand *you*," said the correspondent of the *Interviewer*; "but I expect I shall before I leave."

"He is what is called a cosmopolitan," Isabel suggested.

"That means he's a little of everything and not much of any! I must say I think patriotism is like charity—it begins at home."

"Ah, but where does home begin, Miss Stackpole?" Ralph inquired.

"I don't know where it begins, but I know where it ends. It ended a long time before I got here."

"Don't you like it over here?" asked Mr. Touchett, with his mild, wise, aged, innocent voice.

"Well, sir, I haven't quite made up my mind what ground I shall take. I feel a good deal cramped.

I felt it on the journey from Liverpool to London."

"Perhaps you were in a crowded carriage," Ralph suggested.

"Yes, but it was crowded with friends—a party of Americans whose acquaintance I had made upon the steamer; a most lovely group, from Little Rock, Arkansas. In spite of that I felt cramped—I felt something pressing upon me; I couldn't tell what it was. I felt at the very commencement as if I were not going to sympathise with the atmosphere. But I suppose I shall make my own atmosphere. Your surroundings seem very attractive."

"Ah, we too are a lovely group!" said Ralph. "Wait a little and you will see."

Miss Stackpole showed every disposition to wait, and evidently was prepared to make a considerable stay at Gardencourt. She occupied herself in the mornings with literary labour; but in spite of this Isabel spent many hours with her friend, who, once her daily task performed, was of an eminently social tendency. Isabel speedily found occasion to request her to desist from celebrating the charms of their common sojourn in print, having discovered on the second morning of Miss Stackpole's visit that she was engaged upon a letter to the *Interviewer*, of which the title, in her exquisitely neat and legible hand (exactly that of the copy-books which our heroine remembered at school), was "Americans and Tudors—Glimpses of Gardencourt." Miss Stackpole, with the best conscience in the world, offered to read her letter to Isabel, who immediately put in her protest.

"I don't think you ought to do that—I don't think you ought to describe the place."

Henrietta gazed at her, as usual. "Why, it's just what the people want, and it's a lovely place."

"It's too lovely to be put in the newspapers, and it's not what my uncle wants."

"Don't you believe that!" cried Henrietta. "They are always delighted, afterwards."

"My uncle won't be delighted—nor my cousin, either. They will consider it a breach of hospitality."

Miss Stackpole showed no sense of confusion; she simply wiped her pen, very neatly, upon an elegant little implement which she kept for the purpose, and put away her manuscript. "Of course if you don't approve, I won't do it; but I sacrifice a beautiful subject."

"There are plenty of other subjects, there are subjects all round you. We will take some drives, and I will show you some charming scenery."

"Scenery is not my department: I always need a human interest. You know I am deeply human, Isabel; I always was," Miss Stackpole rejoined. "I was going to bring in your cousin—the alienated American. There is a great demand just now for the alienated American, and your cousin is a beautiful specimen. I should have handled him severely."

"He would have died of it!" Isabel exclaimed. "Not of the severity, but of the publicity."

"Well, I should have liked to kill him a little. And I should have delighted to do your uncle, who seems to me a much nobler type—the American faithful still. He is a grand old man; I don't see how he can object to my paying him honour."

Isabel looked at her companion in much wonderment; it appeared to her so strange that a nature in which she found so much to esteem should exhibit such extraordinary disparities. "My poor Henrietta," she said, "you have no sense of privacy."

Henrietta coloured deeply, and for a moment her brilliant eyes were suffused; while Isabel marvelled more than ever at her inconsistency. "You do me great injustice," said Miss Stackpole, with dignity. "I have never written a word about myself!"

"I am very sure of that; but it

seems to me one should be modest for others also!"

"Ah, that is very good!" cried Henrietta, seizing her pen again. "Just let me make a note of it, and I will put it in a letter!" She was a thoroughly good-natured woman, and half an hour later she was in as cheerful a mood as should have been looked for in a newspaper-correspondent in want of material. "I have promised to do the social side," she said to Isabel; "and how can I do it unless I get ideas? If I can't describe this place, don't you know some place I can describe?" Isabel promised she would bethink herself, and the next day, in conversation with her friend, she happened to mention her visit to Lord Warburton's ancient house. "Ah, you must take me there—that is just the place for me!" Miss Stackpole exclaimed. "I must get a glimpse of the nobility."

"I can't take you," said Isabel; "but Lord Warburton is coming here, and you will have a chance to see him and observe him. Only if you intend to repeat his conversation, I shall certainly give him warning."

"Don't do that!" her companion begged; "I want him to be natural."

"An Englishman is never so natural as when he is holding his tongue!" Isabel rejoined.

It was not apparent, at the end of three days, that his cousin had fallen in love with their visitor, though he had spent a good deal of time in her society. They strolled about the park together, and sat under the trees, and in the afternoon, when it was delightful to float along the Thames, Miss Stackpole occupied a place in the boat in which hitherto Ralph had had but a single companion. Her society had a less insoluble quality than Ralph had expected in the natural perturbation of his sense of the perfect adequacy of that of his cousin; for the correspondent of the *Interviewer* made him laugh a good deal, and he had long since decided that abundant

laughter should be the embellishment of the remainder of his days. Henrietta, on her side, did not quite justify Isabel's declaration with regard to her indifference to masculine opinion; for poor Ralph appeared to have presented himself to her as an irritating problem, which it would be superficial on her part not to solve.

"What does he do for a living?" she asked of Isabel, the evening of her arrival. "Does he go round all day with his hands in his pockets?"

"He does nothing," said Isabel, smiling; "he's a gentleman of leisure."

"Well, I call that a shame—when I have to work like a cotton-mill," Miss Stackpole replied. "I should like to show him up."

"He is in wretched health; he is quite unfit for work," Isabel urged.

"Pshaw! don't you believe it. I work when I am sick," cried her friend. Later, when she stepped into the boat, on joining the water-party, she remarked to Ralph that she supposed he hated her—he would like to drown her.

"Ah no," said Ralph, "I keep my victims for a slower torture. And you would be such an interesting one!"

"Well, you do torture me, I may say that. But I shock all your prejudices; that's one comfort."

"My prejudices? I haven't a prejudice to bless myself with. There's intellectual poverty for you."

"The more shame to you; I have some delicious prejudices. Of course I spoil your flirtation, or whatever it is you call it, with your cousin; but I don't care for that, for I render your cousin the service of drawing you out. She will see how thin you are!"

"Ah, do draw me out!" Ralph exclaimed. "So few people will take the trouble."

Miss Stackpole, in this undertaking, appeared to shrink from no trouble; resorting largely, whenever the opportunity offered, to the natural expedient of interrogation. On the

following day the weather was bad, and in the afternoon the young man, by way of providing in-door amusement, offered to show her the pictures. Henrietta strolled through the long gallery in his society, while he pointed out its principal ornaments and mentioned the painters and subjects. Miss Stackpole looked at the pictures in perfect silence, committing herself to no opinion, and Ralph was gratified by the fact that she delivered herself of none of the little ready-made ejaculations of delight of which the visitors to Gardencourt were so frequently lavish. This young lady indeed, to do her justice, was but little addicted to the use of conventional phrases; there was something earnest and inventive in her tone, which at times, in its brilliant deliberation, suggested a person of high culture speaking a foreign language. Ralph Touchett subsequently learned that she had at one time officiated as art-critic to a Transatlantic journal; but she appeared in spite of this fact to carry in her pocket none of the small change of admiration. Suddenly, just after he had called her attention to a charming Constable, she turned and looked at him as if he himself had been a picture.

"Do you always spend your time like this?" she demanded.

"I seldom spend it so agreeably," said Ralph.

"Well, you know what I mean—without any regular occupation."

"Ah," said Ralph, "I am the idlest man living."

Miss Stackpole turned her gaze to the Constable again, and Ralph bespoke her attention for a small Watteau hanging near it, which represented a gentleman in a pink doublet and hose and a ruff, leaning against the pedestal of the statue of a nymph in a garden, and playing the guitar to two ladies seated on the grass.

"That's my ideal of a regular occupation," he said.

Miss Stackpole turned to him again, and though her eyes had rested upon the picture, he saw that she had not apprehended the subject. She was thinking of something much more serious.

"I don't see how you can reconcile it to your conscience," she said.

"My dear lady, I have no conscience!"

"Well, I advise you to cultivate one. You will need it the next time you go to America."

"I shall probably never go again."

"Are you ashamed to show yourself?"

Ralph meditated, with a gentle smile.

"I suppose that, if one has no conscience, one has no shame."

"Well, you have got plenty of assurance," Henrietta declared. "Do you consider it right to give up your country?"

"Ah, one doesn't give up one's country, any more than one gives up one's grandmother. It's antecedent to choice."

"I suppose that means that you would give it up if you could? What do they think of you over here?"

"They delight in me."

"That's because you truckle to them."

"Ah, set it down a little to my natural charm!" Ralph urged.

"I don't know anything about your natural charm. If you have got any charm, it's quite unnatural. It's wholly acquired—or at least you have tried hard to acquire it, living over here. I don't say you have succeeded! It's a charm that I don't appreciate, any way. Make yourself useful in some way, and then we will talk about it."

"Well now, tell me what I shall do," said Ralph.

"Go right home, to begin with."

"Yes, I see. And then?"

"Take right hold of something."

"Well, now, what sort of thing?"

"Anything you please, so long as

you take hold. Some new idea, some big work."

"Is it very difficult to take hold?" Ralph inquired.

"Not if you put your heart into it."

"Ah, my heart," said Ralph. "If it depends upon my heart——"

"Haven't you got any?"

"I had one a few days ago, but I have lost it since."

"You are not serious," Miss Stackpole remarked; "that's what's the matter with you." But for all this, in a day or two she again permitted him to occupy her mind, and on this occasion assigned a different cause to his mysterious perversity. "I know what's the matter with you, Mr. Touchett," she said. "You think you are too good to get married."

"I thought so till I knew you, Miss Stackpole," Ralph answered; "and then I suddenly changed my mind."

"Oh, pshaw!" Henrietta exclaimed impatiently.

"Then it seemed to me," said Ralph, "that I was not good enough."

"It would improve you. Besides, it's your duty."

"Ah," cried the young man, "one has so many duties! Is that a duty too?"

"Of course it is—did you never know that before? It's every one's duty to get married."

Ralph meditated a moment; he was disappointed. There was something in Miss Stackpole he had begun to like; it seemed to him that, if she was not a charming woman, she was at least a very good fellow. She was wanting in distinction, but, as Isabel had said, she was brave, and there is always something fine about that. He had not supposed her to be capable of vulgar arts; but these last words struck him as a false note. When a marriageable young woman urges matrimony upon an unencumbered young man, the most obvious explanation of her conduct is not the altruistic impulse.

"Ah, well now, there is a good deal to be said about that," Ralph rejoined.

"There may be, but that is the principal thing. I must say I think it looks very exclusive, going round all alone, as if you thought no woman was good enough for you. Do you think you are better than any one else in the world? In America it's usual for people to marry."

"If it's my duty," Ralph asked, "is it not, by analogy, yours as well?"

Miss Stackpole's brilliant eyes expanded still further.

"Have you the fond hope of finding a flaw in my reasoning? Of course I have got as good a right to marry as any one else."

"Well then," said Ralph, "I won't say it vexes me to see you single. It delights me, rather."

"You are not serious yet. You never will be."

"Shall you not believe me to be so on the day that I tell you I desire to give up the practice of going round alone?"

Miss Stackpole looked at him for a moment in a manner which seemed to announce a reply that might technically be called encouraging. But to his great surprise this expression suddenly resolved itself into an appearance of alarm, and even of resentment.

"No, not even then," she answered, dryly. After which she walked away.

"I have not fallen in love with your friend," Ralph said that evening to Isabel, "though we talked some time this morning about it."

"And you said something she didn't like," the girl replied.

Ralph stared. "Has she complained of me?"

"She told me she thinks there is something very low in the tone of Europeans towards women."

"Does she call me a European?"

"One of the worst. She told me

you had said to her something that an American never would have said. But she didn't repeat it."

Ralph treated himself to a burst of resounding laughter.

"She is an extraordinary combination. Did she think I was making love to her?"

"No; I believe Americans do that. But she apparently thought you mistook the intention of something she had said, and put an unkind construction on it."

"I thought she was proposing marriage to me, and I accepted her. Was that unkind?"

Isabel smiled. "It was unkind to me. I don't want you to marry."

"My dear cousin, what is one to do among you all?" Ralph demanded. "Miss Stackpole tells me it's my bounden duty, and that it's hers to see I do mine!"

"She has a great sense of duty," said Isabel, gravely. "She has, indeed, and it's the motive of everything she says. That's what I like her for. She thinks it's very frivolous for you to be single; that's what she meant to express to you. If you thought she was trying to attract you, you were very wrong."

"It is true it was an odd way; but I did think she was trying to attract me. Excuse my superficiality."

"You are very conceited. She had no interested views, and never supposed you would think she had."

"One must be very modest, then, to talk with such women," Ralph said, humbly. "But it's a very strange type. She is too personal—considering that she expects other people not to be. She walks in without knocking at the door."

"Yes," Isabel admitted, "she doesn't sufficiently recognise the existence of knockers; and indeed I am not sure that she doesn't think them a rather pretentious ornament. She thinks one's door should stand ajar. But I persist in liking her."

"I persist in thinking her too

familiar," Ralph rejoined, naturally somewhat uncomfortable under the sense of having been doubly deceived in Miss Stackpole.

"Well," said Isabel, smiling, "I am afraid it is because she is rather vulgar that I like her."

"She would be flattered by your reason!"

"If I should tell her, I would not express it in that way. I should say it is because there is something of the 'people' in her."

"What do you know about the people? and what does she, for that matter?"

"She knows a great deal, and I know enough to feel that she is a kind of emanation of the great democracy — of the continent, the country, the nation. I don't say that she sums it all up, that would be too much to ask of her. But she suggests it; she reminds me of it."

"You like her then for patriotic reasons. I am afraid it is on those very grounds that I object to her."

"Ah," said Isabel, with a kind of joyous sigh, "I like so many things! If a thing strikes me in a certain way, I like it. I don't want to boast, but I suppose I am rather versatile. I like people to be totally different from

Henrietta—in the style of Lord Warburton's sisters, for instance. So long as I look at the Misses Molyneux, they seem to me to answer a kind of ideal. Then Henrietta presents herself, and I am immensely struck with her; not so much for herself as what stands behind her."

"Ah, you mean the back view of her," Ralph suggested.

"What she says is true," his cousin answered; "you will never be serious. I like the great country stretching away beyond the rivers and across the prairies, blooming and smiling and spreading, till it stops at the blue Pacific! A strong, sweet, fresh odour seems to rise from it, and Henrietta—excuse my simile—has something of that odour in her garments."

Isabel blushed a little as she concluded this speech, and the blush, together with the momentary ardour she had thrown into it, was so becoming to her that Ralph stood smiling at her for a moment after she had ceased speaking.

"I am not sure the Pacific is blue," he said; "but you are a woman of imagination. Henrietta, however, is fragrant—Henrietta is decidedly fragrant!"

HENRY JAMES, JR.

(To be continued.)

POLITICAL SOMNAMBULISM.

ARE not nations liable to an infirmity analogous to somnambulism? Are they not often seen walking confidently, or even rushing along eagerly, with their eyes shut, that is, not prepared by any kind of political education to see what is before them, or against what objects they may bruise themselves? The question might be asked at any time, but it is particularly seasonable at a moment when the nation seems unusually confident and ready for rapid motion.

Democratic states are especially liable to this infirmity, and of democratic states especially those which are in the first stages of democracy. Where the government is in the hands of a class there are other dangers, but there is not this particular danger of public action being taken wholly without due knowledge or consideration. Even a democracy, if you give it time, may perhaps learn caution, or educate itself politically. But a state where the democracy is young and sanguine, and where no one is taught politics, is a somnambulist state, and if it has at all a difficult road to travel, is exposed to the greatest dangers. Do not these conditions meet in England at the present time?

Assuredly the spirit of innovation was never at any former time so utterly unrestrained. Reformers now — and we are all reformers — have ceased to admit that any institutions are too fundamental to be touched. The time was when all the greater questions were closed for Englishmen by the happiness of an exceptional position which made it unnecessary for us to discuss them. We had a perfect constitution both in State and Church; the kingdoms might rage and the people be moved; we were sheltered from all

such agitations. But now insensibly we have drifted into other latitudes; we seem now quite prepared to raise, even without necessity, the very questions which our ancestors considered it the great masterpiece to suppress. Do we trust to our national genius for politics? I hope not. I like to hear foreigners speak of this genius, but I do not like to hear English people congratulate themselves upon it. How many exceptional advantages have we enjoyed! How little have we been exposed to the particular trials which have impeded the progress of continental countries! When we consider this, we may well doubt whether we have any right to set down our prosperity to any peculiar wisdom of our own. Besides this, the political talent, which undoubtedly appears in some pages of English history, was the talent of our old governing classes. They acquired it by long practice in government, and by many mistakes which English history records not less plainly. What reason have we to suppose that the new governing classes have any such talent? To judge by the last two general elections, they are beginning their politics, as might be expected, at the beginning. If they have the talent, it remains to be developed, and it will be developed probably in the usual manner, by monstrous mistakes committed, and great calamities suffered in consequence. Their advent to power is already marked by the total disappearance of all the old political maxims which embodied the wisdom of their predecessors. All those misconceptions of the nature and objects of government which we used to ridicule in the French, and hold ourselves superior to, are now taken for granted, as if they had never been

questioned, and assumed as incontrovertible axioms in the popular discussion of the day. We have been suddenly converted to all the fallacies we used to take a pride in detecting. All the ideology, all the "metapolitics," to use the expression of my friend Stein, the inveterate confusion between politics and philosophy, or between politics and religion,—all this has now become naturalised in England. And, indeed, how could it be otherwise? Those mistakes are inevitably made by beginners in politics, and we have transferred the control of affairs into the hands of beginners.

Nominally, indeed, we have all admitted that the newly enfranchised classes ought to receive some sort of education to prepare them for their political functions. And yet nothing has been done for this object. We seem to have set our minds at rest by one of the worst of those rhetorical sophistries by which we drug ourselves, the sophistry of speaking of the suffrage as being itself an education. The suffrage, I maintain, is no education at all; it has no tendency whatever to make people wiser. Conferred on those who are entirely untutored, it can do nothing but develop and give substance to error and misconception. *Ex stultis insanos facit.* Education is no such easy popular process. It does not consist simply in drawing attention to a subject, but involves discipline, the detection of mistakes, continuous effort and personal responsibility on the part of the learner.

But it is not only in the newly enfranchised classes that this novel political tone may be observed. Almost as much metapolitics may now be detected in the political discussion of the middle classes. In the newest phase of fashion all political questions are despatched summarily — alike in drawing-rooms and at working-men's clubs—by direct deduction from the vaguest general propositions, precisely as in the most primitive periods of science. Neither the working men nor those new-fledged politicians, the ladies,

and scarcely, it seems to me, university-bred men themselves, admit or conceive either that there is any difficulty in these questions or any great danger of misapprehending them, and still less that they absolutely require careful study. We have caught the tone of the Parisian *salons* of the last days of the old *régime*, when ladies and gentlemen settled, without the least misgiving, and without a suspicion that they might not have immediately at hand all the materials for forming a decision, the most momentous questions, when, as M. Taine says, "the questions of the existence of God and of the immortality of the soul came in with the coffee!"

I confess I hardly understand what view is taken by those politicians who nowadays seem eager to put all the largest, most momentous, and most difficult questions before the people for an immediate decision. Do they suppose the people to be inspired? Or perhaps that they have a simple common sense which in the most intricate questions unerringly finds the right conclusion? This is almost the infatuation of Robespierre. It brings to mind his famous *dictum*, "Let us begin by laying it down that the people are good, but that its delegates are corruptible!"

I often think of a remark I once heard made by a working man at a club; it rises to my mind whenever I want a measure of the competence of the great mass of working men to judge of large national questions. It was at an early stage of the great Eastern controversy, and he settled the question of our relations with Russia in this way. "I do not know how you feel," he said, turning to the audience of working men, "and I do not know how it is, but whenever I hear the Russians mentioned, I feel the blood tingling all over me." He spoke as if he thought this instinctive feeling might be fairly taken as an intimation of the proper steps to be taken, and when I expressed alarm and horror at such a mode of handling the question, I thought I

could observe that many among the audience were surprised at the impression it had made on me. But I carried away a conception I never had before of the utter childishness with respect to great public matters not immediately affecting themselves in which vast multitudes of people live. It will be answered that the working classes respond with remarkable enthusiasm to any appeal made to their moral feelings. No doubt their minds are in a fallow state, and will yield any crop easily. That very man who could not bear to hear the Russians mentioned, has, I daresay, since given his voice just as eagerly in their favour. But there is little comfort in this reflexion. Without information, still more without a just way of conceiving political questions, they are just as likely to vote wrong when their good feelings are roused as when they are under the dominion of their animal instincts.

The notion seems widely spread that in politics good feelings and good intentions are the main thing, and almost the only thing, that if a people once has these, it will go right in the main, as if the difference between good politics and bad politics were, as Mr. Bright seems to hold, almost entirely moral and scarcely at all intellectual. And yet one of the principal lessons of recent history is the infinite de-ceivableness of the generous, impulsive, popular mind. No one questions the generous ardour of 1789, or that when the Revolution entered upon its career of unprincipled conquest, many Frenchmen really thought they were setting free and benefiting the countries they overran; no one doubts the sincerity of that worship of Napoleon to which Béranger gave expression. The people had good intentions, but Napoleon was clever enough to deceive them. And so when thirty years later universal suffrage was given to that nation, when for the first time the voice of the French people was really heard, it called Louis Napoleon to the head of affairs, and established a system of which we have seen the

results. These are instances of what I call somnambulism; they show the essential importance of a real knowledge of surrounding realities, of open eyes, and of a clear sight of the road along which the nation must walk, and the total insufficiency in politics of mere good intentions.

It is indeed hard, nay, impossible, for a whole people to have such real knowledge. The masses, as a matter of course, have not leisure to acquire even the information, and still less the just way of thinking, which are necessary for a sound political judgment. What they might in some degree acquire is, as I have said, the knowledge that there is such a knowledge, the distrust of their own instincts, of their higher as well as their lower instincts, the distrust of empty rhetoric, and the power of discerning in others that political judgment they can scarcely have themselves.

But perhaps some considerable time will yet pass before the working classes take full possession of their power. In the meanwhile everything still depends on the middle-class, in which are included most of the best educated men in the country. This class has hitherto shown prudence, and has even been renowned in the world for political sense and tact. But the conditions are greatly changed when Radicalism becomes for the first time triumphant, and takes up its position as, in some sort, the dominant practical creed. That this should happen at last was not at all surprising. In an age which has witnessed so much successful innovation, such a renewing of machinery in every department but politics, the hour was certain to arrive when people would think without too much anxiety of sending the old English constitution after the old stage-coach and the old "wooden walls." But the enterprise of renewing English institutions, though possibly feasible, is certainly serious and hazardous. It will tax political ability infinitely more than the modest task, to which we have hitherto confined ourselves, of altering

an old house where it seemed to need repair. That asks only good sense and good temper, but widely different qualities are needed by those who would handle fundamental questions. Hitherto we have held it unsafe even to open such questions, and surely it is unsafe unless we duly prepare ourselves to deal with them. A rough common-sense knowledge of politics might suffice for the old system, but Radicalism aims higher. Radicalism as a dominant system, presumes the existence of a large class of people systematically trained in political science.

Has England this class? We seem to mistake the habit of busying ourselves with practical politics for a taste for political science. But it is surprising how little connexion there is between the two things, and what confused notions of politics many men have who pass their whole lives in practical political business. "We are not political philosophers," wrote Mr. Gladstone, not long ago. This is indeed a fact of which we often boast. In an age of Radicalism the boast cannot too soon become obsolete, for Radical politics are not safe except in the hands of political philosophers.

The truth is that, till quite lately, the highest education given in England left a man almost entirely without political instruction. It was much if the study of Thucydides or Aristotle's *Politics* imparted to him the knowledge that there was a higher and serener sort of political science than that expounded by Whig and Tory newspapers. We used to assert indeed that our classical system afforded an excellent introduction to political studies. This might be true, but it was an introduction which came too late. Thucydides and Aristotle might have done much if they had been closely followed by a host of modern writers on politics, and if the study of Athens and Rome had been followed by a study equally serious of modern England, France, and Germany. As it was, while a few men, who had exceptional opportunities, followed up

the hints their classical education had given them, and became instructed politicians, the great majority closed their political studies when they closed their Aristotle, and never afterwards succeeded in bringing together in their minds the chaos of English party politics and the few germs of political science which they had picked up at the university. Improvements have now been introduced, but it remains in the main true that the influence of science, of the school, is *nil* in English politics. What Englishmen know of politics, they have picked up in various ways, but there is one way in which they have not acquired it, they have not been taught it.

Now large changes must be made on large principles, and such large principles are the last thing which the English mind excogitates for itself. The helplessness of the general English intellect on this side has often been remarked. When it is in want of a principle, it snatches at any general proposition which sounds a little impressive, a little solemn, and applies it peremptorily with slight regard either to its truth or to its pertinence. It is all the more a slave to empty generalities when it listens to them at all, because it listens to them so seldom, and is so slow in originating them. The moment is very critical when such a nation as this enters for the first time on the path of speculative politics.

Radicalism considered as a ruling creed is too new among us to have been sufficiently criticised. It has risen to the head of affairs almost before people have done denying it to be serious. Now that the nation has suddenly adopted its fundamental principle there is some danger of its whole programme being accepted *en bloc*. But after having made good its case against the negative criticism of the ancient parties it ought to go before the discriminating criticism of science. Granted that our politics ought not to be bound eternally by precedent, granted that

there are principles in politics—still principles are of two kinds, true and false. Advanced thinkers may not be, as they used to be considered, necessarily unpractical, still the question remains whether they have been advancing in the right direction or in the wrong one. And when we consider how raw we are, as a nation, in political speculation, how capable in our innocence of adopting one after another all the false systems that ever were exploded, we ought surely to be much on our guard against the schemes of innovation that are now proposed to us as founded on philosophical principles, or as required by the spirit of the age. On such schemes scepticism has not yet done half its work. It remains to be decided whether those philosophical principles are more solid than a hundred metaphysical systems which have been forgotten after a brief day of popularity.

What criticism do we apply to these schemes? Are we satisfied with our system of a succession of popular party speeches followed by a general election? Do not those two miracles of popular will, the elections of 1874 and 1880, excite a certain misgiving in our minds? If indeed all political questions are level to the meanest capacity, if the plausible view in politics is always the true view, then our system leaves nothing to be desired. But if the obvious conclusion drawn from a small number of obvious facts is sometimes misleading, then nothing can be more futile than these great popular decisions, which never even profess to look below the surface. How would it fare with the best ascertained truths of science if they underwent such an ordeal? Many of these are flatly opposed to all ordinary or popular impressions, some of them actually to what is called the evidence of the senses. Imagine how the great voice of the people would pronounce on the question whether the earth went round the sun or the sun round the earth! Imagine the contempt and ridicule and moral indignation which

would overwhelm the party which should maintain the true opinion! They would never hold up their heads again. It would be said that they had always secretly despised the people, that they had too long successfully hoodwinked them; but that now at length they had gone too far, now at last they had unmasked themselves, and for the future the nation would know what to think of them!

The unsoundness of some of the ideas which pass among us for advanced, may be illustrated by a conspicuous example, which it will be worth while to consider at some length.

It is easy to remark that men's views of politics vary with their views of history. We guide ourselves in the larger political questions by great historical precedents. In the last generation men were made Conservatives more by the single fact that the French Revolution led to the Reign of Terror than by all the reasoning in the world. In these days men take up the cause of democracy not so much on abstract reasoning as because they think they see that democracy succeeds in America, or because France, in spite of her misfortunes, is still immensely rich and prosperous. Sometimes these historical arguments are quite far-fetched, and yet produce a great effect. What a multitude of educated men were led to democratic views by Mr. Grote's animated picture of the glories of the Athenian democracy! It must be confessed that it requires much research to form a trustworthy estimate of these great historical phenomena. But people think they are practically safe if they look only to broad historical results. They fancy that, though historians may differ about small details, the large outlines are clear of all doubt, and so the practical moral of history may be easily drawn. Nothing, in my opinion, can be more erroneous than this view. It is the large outlines which are most easily falsified, and which party historians have most interest in falsifying. To falsify a fact is comparatively

difficult, but the meaning or character of a fact can easily be misstated. It costs a skilful party historian only the turn of a phrase, and the greatest event in the world—the Reformation or the Revolution—is turned upside down, and made to yield a lesson directly opposite to that which it really teaches.

Now the educated class in England does not study modern history. They will read it with pleasure—English history if it is at all attractively written, continental history if it is written very attractively. But they read it in the easy chair, and only care to remember what amuses them. And yet their political opinions are very materially influenced by this luxurious reading. Since Macaulay wrote, no opinion but his about the Revolution of 1688 has had any currency in England. Was this because he proved his points? Not at all. His partiality on many points was clearly perceived. It was in fact generally agreed that he was a party historian. But that made no difference. His views were universally adopted for the simple reason that his book was amusing, and that to test his statements in detail cost too much trouble. And there can be no doubt that this universal adoption of a particular view of that revolution produced the strongest effect upon the politics of the day.

Now it so happens that modern Radicalism has not yet written its history of England. If a great Radical writer of the calibre of Grote or Mill had gone over those critical events of English history upon our view of which our political opinions mainly depend, the revolutions of the seventeenth century, or the great war with revolutionary France, it is impossible to say what an effect might have been produced. But this was not done, and, in the absence of a Grote, modern Radicals seem in general to fall back upon Mr. Carlyle. In recent debates Radicalism seemed to be trying to express itself by praises of Cromwell in the tone of Mr. Carlyle, particu-

larly—where the praise of Cromwell came in very strangely—in the attack on the proposed statue of the Prince Imperial. The author of *Shooting Niagara* is, to be sure, hardly a Radical, but in default of a better historical representative of their views, the party seem to make the best of Mr. Carlyle, as being at least neither Tory nor Whig.

Now the fact that the Radical party are inclined to adopt Cromwell for a hero is one which, as the French say, *fait rêver*. It shows how prone we are to assume that in politics all who think must be substantially agreed, and cannot differ among themselves, but differ only from those who from prejudice refuse to think. Only on this supposition could Mr. Carlyle be an oracle to the democratic party, when he has all along opposed democracy. According to him, nothing can be more false than to suppose that government can be well conducted by an assembly, nothing can be more contemptible than what is called the popular will, and even liberty itself is a chimera. According to him aristocracy, monarchy, and, in a sense, priesthood, are substantially good and necessary things, which need rather to be revived than to be abolished. The Radical party does not seem in the least inclined to listen to this teaching, which is indeed more opposed to their views than Toryism or Whiggism. Why, then, do they listen with favour to Mr. Carlyle's historical teaching? Assuredly the merit of Mr. Carlyle as a political preacher is far more unquestionable than his merit as a historian. And yet in most cases it will be found that the modern Radical adopts as a matter of course the Carlylian view of our civil wars, holding that the Restoration was a great calamity and an act of moral apostasy on the part of the nation, and that Cromwell was the inspired hero who, surpassing all the half-hearted Pym and Hampdens of the Rebellion, showed England the true path she ought to have pursued. How can this

be, except, as I said, because people can imagine a prejudiced and false view, or an unprejudiced and true view, of English history, but are quite incapable of conceiving a view unprejudiced and yet false? It seems never to occur to them that a writer may study the Great Rebellion and similar events with a mind perfectly clear from old constitutional, Whig or Tory, preconceptions, and yet take a wholly mistaken view of it, because, though he has a philosophy, his philosophy is false.

Is it then so easy to understand history, if only Conservative prejudice be resisted? We blame the French for allowing the story of Napoleon to be turned into a lying legend which by its fascination has misled them into the gravest practical errors. Here plainly it was not prejudice but the fascination of rhetoric and poetry that perverted history. But are we not as frivolous as the French in this matter? When we abandoned the old constitutional view of Cromwell for that of Mr. Carlyle, we may possibly have shaken off some prejudice, but it certainly was not to philosophy but to poetry, not to better instruction but to richer amusement, that we sacrificed our prejudices.

History is liable to a peculiar corruption when it falls into the hands of purely literary men, a corruption the seriousness of which is seldom perceived. The men and the deeds which suit the purposes of the literary man writing history are wholly different from those which attract the historian proper. The best statesmanship, the most successful politics, make dull reading, and what charms the imagination in history is precisely that which, considered as politics, is worst. Thus Mr. Hamerton tells us that French society "round his house" cannot be induced to take any interest in English politics, because of their tameness and uniformity. In other words, because in England we avoid revolutions and civil wars, which is precisely what it were desirable that the French should

learn to do, for that very reason they can see nothing to interest them in our affairs! This paradox is very important when we are considering the effect of history on political opinions in a country where history is not studied seriously. In England we change our opinions according to the amusing books on history which happen to appear. We read modern history only on the strict condition that it shall be amusing. As a natural consequence it falls into the hands of purely literary men. But such writers, in looking about for material, will not be attracted by those parts of history which afford instruction, for nothing is duller than political instruction; they will look about for exciting events, for wars and revolutions. And therefore in such a country the heroes of wars and revolutions must steadily rise in reputation.

Some time ago I expressed in this magazine my opinion that Macaulay's *History* has introduced a period of decline in that department of historical literature which deals with recent periods. It has driven out, I maintained, the true and high conception of history and replaced it by a false, vulgar, and popular conception. Now the corrupt fashion then introduced, which assumed that genius is shown in history solely by vivid, picturesque language, and that investigation, criticism, and historical philosophy, are mere humdrum in which no genius can possibly be shown; that, in short, a historian is simply a brilliant narrator, and not rather an investigator and a discoverer,—this corrupt fashion essentially consisted in the historian proper being superseded by the literary man writing history. Since the time when Macaulay, who might so well have claimed the former title, elected to appear in the latter part, it is surprising to notice to what a length the notion has since been carried that any lively *littérateur* may write history. Mr. Bayard Taylor tells us that Thackeray showed him the materials he had collected for a

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history of Queen Anne, and told him that he felt sure he should *succeed*. So that we might have had the happiness of reading a history of England by the author of *Vanity Fair*! And the author of *Vanity Fair* would have done us less harm than Lamartine and Victor Hugo have done to our neighbours.

I urged at the same time that the secret cause of this corruption is the absence of any sufficiently organised school of modern history whether at the universities or elsewhere. The historian finds himself writing, not—as every writer aiming at science should write—for the students in his own department of learning, who alone are at all qualified to understand or to judge him, but for the general public. He thus naturally becomes demoralised. To this cause is to be added the immense demand for books of history for the young. Every schoolmaster asks me what ought to be done to induce boys to read history. To which my answer is, ‘Anything or everything may be done except to spoil history itself in the hope of making it readable.’ At all times literature needs to be protected from the insidious influence of youth and of the family, which in any department where the demand of mature men is slack draws it gradually down into a lower sphere. “*Immer für Weiber und Kinder!*” writes Goethe, “*ich dünkte man schriebe für Männer.*” But the English literature of the last generation has suffered in an especial degree from this cause. Macaulay let loose the plague upon modern history with peculiar effect, just because he was a writer of such grave and high pretensions. He was the literary man writing history under the most imposing disguise of the historian proper.

Mr. Carlyle wore no such disguise. He was a literary historian pure and simple, who had studied in the school neither of practical nor theoretical politics, but in that of German æsthetics and literature in the most dreamy

period of Germany. I should be sorry to speak of him in language which should hurt his warmest admirers. I admire as much as others this striking reappearance of the Hebrew prophet in the modern world. No mere echo or literary imitation of Hebrew prophecy, but the thing itself; the faculty of seeing moral evils which others are too drowsy to see, and of seeing them as distinctly as if they were material objects, the sublime impatience, the overwhelming denunciation, in fact, ancient prophecy revived and effective as of old; this is what I see in his best writings, in *Past and Present* and some of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*. The case is different when he appears as a historian, for it is questionable whether a prophet ought to write history. But yet up to a certain point I can cordially admire his histories. We are to consider that, like his prophecies, they had an immediate practical object. They were not intended to conform to any ideal standard; they were prophecies on a larger scale, intended to awaken drowsy minds to a sense of the greatness of God's judgments and the inexorableness of the laws by which He governs the modern world, as He governed the ancient. Considered thus, they are wonderful works, and we know that in some conspicuous instances they attained their end, they did awaken, and to good purpose, the slumbering historic sense. Of these three prophetic histories, that of the French Revolution is, in my opinion, much the most successful, and for this reason, that the subject is best suited to the prophetic mode of treatment. The prophet is out of his element when he has no practical object. Mr. Carlyle has, in my opinion, no real talent for reviving distant times, such as that of Cromwell; if he sometimes makes the past seem to live it is only with a galvanic and unnatural life which belongs really to the present. But the French Revolution may fairly be said to belong to the present, and

then its awfulness and the impressiveness of the punishment which it inflicted on the frivolity of the old French aristocracy make it a most legitimate subject for the apocalyptic method. I value also, both in this book and in the *Life of Friedrich*, the first serious attempt that has been made to break through the trance of insularity which seals up the English mind. Here, for once, an Englishman has honestly tried to understand the continental world! I do not for my part think that Frederick really was such a person as Mr. Carlyle supposes, nor do I think that Mr. Carlyle has drawn the true moral from his career. But at any rate, he has not spared labour. If he has scarcely succeeded, the fault is to be laid not on any insular want of sympathy, but simply on that prophetic cast of mind which does not know how to investigate, and cannot see at all except where it sees intensely and instinctively. He has, at any rate, repaired the mischief which had been done by Macaulay's *Essay on Frederick the Great*, which to this day is cited with contempt by every German writer who wishes to jibe at English conceit and ignorance of the Continent.

But the merit of all these books alike is simply in the art of representation, and this art is only good on the supposition that the reader is dull, or has never acquired a taste for history. For it consists, after all, simply in enormous exaggeration, and is therefore quite as repulsive to the serious historical student as it is attractive to the beginner in history. Even where, as in the *History of the French Revolution*, Mr. Carlyle has not perhaps seriously perverted the truth, I cannot think that the practised reader of history can regard his work but with impatience and complete dissatisfaction. To such a reader all the prophecy is mere verbiage, for it announces what he is in no danger of overlooking, so that all the emphasis and all the reiteration fall flat upon his

ear, and seem as out of date as the inspiration of the Koran. Meanwhile he perceives that the prophet's whole attention has been exhausted upon the mere *scenery* of the event, that his insight into its nature and causes is not great, and in particular that he has discovered nothing. No such reader could ever learn much from Mr. Carlyle, even when his work first appeared, and even considered as a work for beginners, I fear that this book, if it has an awakening influence upon some, has a confusing effect for others. The glare of those pictures draws off the eye from that which most deserves to be contemplated; a biographical interest is substituted for a historic one; and I notice that, in spite of the great number of Englishmen who have read it with eager interest, no tolerably clear understanding of the French Revolution is commonly to be found in England.

But the worst is that Mr. Carlyle usually produces his effects at the expense of truth. I do not mean to charge him with misstating facts. He is no doubt as careful about correctness, particularly in costume, as a modern stage-manager, but in greater matters, particularly in the greatest of all, in his estimate of great events and characters, he seems to me entirely astray. I regard him as the principal representative of that false tendency in history which Macaulay made fashionable, the tendency to substitute a literary for a political estimate. He makes no secret of this tendency, but everywhere avows it as if he were introducing a reform and not a new abuse. And yet, as I have said, this literary estimate positively turns history upside down. It teaches us to admire in the past whatever we most disapprove in the present, bloody catastrophes, desperate policies, revolutions. Nothing can exceed the simplicity with which Mr. Carlyle avows that he takes no interest in any wise, successful statesman who has brought happiness to his country, and that he feels

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no admiration for such a character. In his *Essay on Mirabeau* he ridicules the English public for continuing to repeat the names of Pitt and Fox when heroes like the leaders of the French Revolution were soliciting their homage. Of these leaders he selects three, Mirabeau, Danton, and Napoleon, whom he is prepared to maintain to be characters of an altogether higher order than Pitt and Fox. Now on what ground? Evidently because of the terrible events with which they were mixed up. Mr. Carlyle means to say that stormy scenes in the Tennis Court or in the Paris streets, September massacres, battles of Austerlitz, excite his imagination, while Regency debates and the like put him to sleep. So feels, no doubt, the literary man in search of a subject. It is little to say that the historian proper judges differently. He *reverses* the judgment. To him the enormous disquiet of France is the strongest presumptive evidence against the revolutionary statesmen, and the comparative tranquillity of England the best proof of the merit of Pitt and Fox.

These general observations upon Mr. Carlyle as a historian have been intended to lead to some remarks on his famous achievement, the rehabilitation of Cromwell. We know what was the old constitutional view of the Great Rebellion; on one side of politics there was of course total disapproval, on the other side vindication and admiration, but most carefully qualified. Hallam, the Whig, qualifies his approbation of Pym and Hampden so far as to hint that even at the beginning of the Civil War their case was already a bad one. As for the military party, which in the course of 1648 became predominant with Cromwell at its head, he condemns them altogether, and his estimate of Cromwell is singularly severe, though he does justice to his ability. Hallam may be taken to represent the purely political view. In Macaulay the tone taken is a degree more literary. He

avoids, apparently with intention, giving any deliberate estimate of Cromwell, but is always warmer and more eloquent than Hallam in speaking of his achievements.

Now comes Mr. Carlyle with the purely literary view. He tells us that he has sincerely tried to admire the Pym and the Hampdens, but at the bottom "he has found that it would not do." Of course not; we are quite prepared to hear that Cromwell seems to him as much superior to Pym and Hampden as Mirabeau, Danton, and Napoleon to Pitt and Fox. For he is thinking of the subject purely as a literary man, and he sees that from a literary point of view there can be no comparison between the hero of Naseby and Dunbar and two civilians, even though those two civilians did set on foot a civil war. Accordingly, he throws aside entirely the received opinion, and sets up the military party, rejected before by Whigs and Tories alike, for our admiration. In the midst of this military party, like Charlemagne among his peers, or Napoleon among his marshals, stands Cromwell, set high above all the statesmen of the Rebellion, and indeed high above all English statesmen, as a genius of the same order in politics as Shakespeare in literature.

It might have seemed impossible that the public should approve such a total subversion of all received views on a question which is fundamental in English politics, at least without the most careful examination. For if Mr. Carlyle is right, England has been on the wrong path for two hundred years, since it may be said that our politics ever since have been based upon the principle that the Great Rebellion was a mistake, and have consisted principally in expedients for avoiding the recurrence of such mistakes. It is needless to say that it does not cost Mr. Carlyle anything to affirm that England has been on the wrong path for two hundred years. As a prophet, he would not be at his ease if he had a thesis less enormous to support.

For a prophet is nothing unless he is alone against the world, surrounded with mocking and wondering faces, and therefore when a prophet makes the mistake of writing history, he must needs begin by reversing all received opinions. As a matter of course therefore, Mr. Carlyle must maintain that the Restoration, which is the starting-point of modern English politics, was not only a mistake, but a great act of national apostasy, and that the system which has grown out of it, though it has given us a remarkable and long-continued prosperity, and though it has been imitated in other European countries as almost an ideal system, is a contemptible and impious sham, which has brought England to the depths of moral ignominy. This was a matter of course, and it was also natural that he should not support the position by argument—that would be unworthy of a prophet—but simply by violent assertion, reiteration, and denunciation. What seems less intelligible is that by such methods he should succeed. And yet I think he has succeeded. His opinion is now adopted, or rather taken for granted, by all those who would not be thought reactionary. If you are not an old-world Tory, admiring Charles I., and thinking the opposition to him impious, it seems now a matter of course that you admire Cromwell, detest the Restoration, and sneer at the Revolution as a half-hearted compromise.

This may seem strange, and yet after all it is not strange when we consider that the public does not regard history seriously. For Mr. Carlyle's book really *was* amusing, and what would you have more? Here is a book that can be read. What a relief after those dreary constitutional tomes, to come upon a book glowing with all the hues of poetry! On one page it is sublime, and then on the next, or even on the same page, it is so exquisitely odd and funny! you would say the prophet Isaiah writing for *Punch*. How natural then that we

should give up our old opinions about the Great Rebellion, pronounce Cromwell an ideal hero-king, execrate the Restoration, and sneer at the Revolution! It was inevitable, when we consider it. Other causes no doubt co-operated. There were the instincts which have led the French to deify Napoleon, unavowed no doubt, but still powerful, and which we did not think it unsafe to indulge in the case of Cromwell, because *his* battles were gained in the cause of religion. Then there was the pleasure which the whole religious world felt when they learnt that a religious man, who had so long been despised as a hypocrite, was really one of the greatest and wisest statesmen of history. Then, again, many literary men felt it a relief to see a fine subject rescued out of the hands of lawyers and politicians, and ready to be clothed in the diction of romance and poetry. And, lastly, Radicalism wanted its theory of the Rebellion, and by means of that strange foreign fancy, that military imperialism has a certain affinity with liberty, managed to hit it off with Cromwell, and with a historian who never conceals the contempt he feels for liberty.

I do not complain of Mr. Carlyle for treating Cromwell's life in a new way. There was in truth great need that this should be done. That a man of such striking and strongly marked character should be, as it were, tabooed by history, that writers should be afraid to speak at large about him, that he should never be mentioned except in the tone of invective, or of timid apology, this was ridiculous. He had a right to a biography which should be heartily sympathetic.

Nor do I complain of Mr. Carlyle for defending Cromwell's religious sincerity, nor yet for asserting him to have been an honest, well-intentioned, as well as an able man. Historians have ordinarily spoken far too much of crime, and far too little of mistake. In such a confused age as Cromwell's, in such an abeyance of all ordinary

political rules, when decisions had to be taken suddenly and often in the dark, a man of excellent intentions may find himself in a very questionable position, and all the more easily if he has the kind of prompt, daring character which most insures immediate success. The quickest runner, once on the wrong road, will go furthest astray. When Cromwell began to take the lead the all-important decision had been already taken. Civil war had been entered on. If this decision was wrong, Cromwell was from the beginning on the wrong road. It is easy for historians in a quiet time to criticise and condemn the daring deeds of a great man thus hopelessly entangled; but there is something to my mind pharisaical in the "high tone of morality" which such historians pride themselves on preserving. I therefore go heartily with Mr. Carlyle when he discards the carping, fault-finding, moralising tone of former writers on Cromwell, and am quite willing to accept all that he urges in proof of his hero's nobleness, gentleness, and sincerity of character.

But when I have conceded all this to Mr. Carlyle, it seems to me that the question of Cromwell's work as a statesman, and of his position in English history, remains still to be discussed. He himself may have been good, and yet his system very bad. His career may have been well-intentioned and morally excusable, and yet it may have been a great mistake. He may be a grand figure for the imagination to contemplate, and yet his system of politics may have been mischievous. This is what the literary man writing history can never be brought to conceive. The great man to him is always the man who makes a striking figure on the historical stage. It is this misconception which has led the French to Napoleonism, and evidently the English counterpart of that illusion is Mr. Carlyle's theory of Cromwell.

The question I propose is, What

would a Radical historian such as Grote have said about Cromwell? Let us put aside entirely all old-fashioned constitutional prejudices, from which no doubt Hallam is by no means free; but let us put aside at the same time all the new-fashioned prejudices to which Mr. Carlyle is a slave, the taste for strong literary sensations, for stirring incidents and strong characters. Let us be politicians, not poets, and with this determination let us ask ourselves what we think of the Great Rebellion, of Cromwell, and of the Restoration. There are many points on which I for my part suspend my judgment. Among these is the all-important question whether the final breach between Parliament and King in the last months of 1641 was not really unavoidable. It is useless to discuss this until Mr. Gardiner has told us all he knows. The panic on the side of the parliamentary leaders was extreme, and by no means unreasonable. If the course they took was extreme, the necessity appeared to them, and could not but appear to them, extreme also. They might feel that they had only a choice of evils. Here, as in the principal acts of Cromwell, the moral question is intricate if not insoluble. But the principal political questions, whether the Civil War, unavoidable or not, was likely to lead to a good result; whether the military party, honest or not, had a right to suppress liberty in England; whether the militarism of Cromwell, well-intentioned or not, was a good form of government; and, lastly, whether the Restoration of Charles II., whatever we think of his character, or of the profligacy of his court, was salutary or not,—these are questions which there need be no difficulty in deciding. It seems to me that an intelligent Radical would answer all these questions in almost exactly the same way as they were answered by Hallam. He would say that, as a matter of course, the military government, whether in its first nominally republican form, or in the open im-

perialism of Cromwell, was a most bad and fatal system, and that, as a matter of course, the Restoration was a most necessary and salutary measure, by which all that was good in England was saved from destruction.

The Restoration was not a return to servitude, but the precise contrary. It was a great emancipation, an exodus out of servitude into liberty. We all, I suppose, know theoretically that there are more forms than one of tyranny, but practically we seem to treat military imperialism as if it were not among these forms. Perhaps because in modern Europe it has always been a short-lived, transient phenomenon, which has disappeared before men have had time to be disgusted with it, or for some other reason, the military tyranny of our Interregnum and of the Napoleons in France has left a slighter impression than the tyranny of the Stuarts and of the Bourbons. In our own case perhaps it is because we confuse the moral with the political question. Morally no doubt it seems hard to speak of Cromwell as a tyrant; morally no doubt it is absurd to class him with James II. But this ought not to tempt us to absolve the military system, or to overlook the fact that in itself it is a far greater scourge, a far more fatal evil, than such arbitrary government as that of the Tudors or of the early Stuarts. As to the later Stuarts, I regard them as pupils of Cromwell. I think that any one who tries to penetrate their design will find that it was their great ambition to appropriate Cromwell's methods for the benefit of the old monarchy. But, as we know, they were unsuccessful pupils. They failed where their model had succeeded, and the distinction of having enslaved England remained peculiar to Cromwell.

As Cromwell was probably no tyrant in intention, so it is no doubt true that in act he was much more than a mere tyrant. I could enlarge, had I space, upon the great results of his statesmanship which remained to England after his tyranny was destroyed. On

condition that it did not last his system might be regarded as beneficial. But had it lasted, had the house of Cromwell established itself in England, I take it that all which has since made the glory of our country would have been lost. England would have become a military state, and the Cromwellian monarchy would have been a sort of Protestant counterpart of the monarchy of Louis XIV. Moreover, when we are estimating the Restoration, we are before all things to remember that the Stuarts did not take the place of the Cromwells, but only of the military anarchy which followed the disappearance of the Cromwells.

It is no less untrue to call the Restoration an apostasy from virtue than to describe it as a return to servitude. I have no fancy whatever to rehabilitate Charles II. or his court, and it is easy to make an effective contrast between the scandals of the Restoration and the decorum of the Interregnum. But George Eliot warns us against that narrow, purely private view of morality to which we are too prone. A nation is demoralised much more by public crimes than by private vices. And whatever excuses may be made for the founders of the military government, whatever reasons we may allege for believing them sincere and well-intentioned, it remains that they had crushed the liberties of the country and established the degrading supremacy of an army. The cause of demoralisation lay here, and especially in the fact that the destruction of liberty had been accomplished in the name of religion. The military government might be decorous, but it was fundamentally immoral. Miscalling itself a republic, it was a tyranny founded on mere force. The Restoration government was presided over by a cynic and a libertine, but the government itself was legitimate in the best sense of the word, for it was founded not only on ancient laws, but also on the hearty, well-nigh unanimous, consent of the people. When therefore we are

told of the relaxation of morals which followed the Restoration, let us inquire what party was responsible for it. Macaulay himself has charged it upon the Puritans, who, according to him, strained the moral bond until it broke. But this explanation, I take it, misses the point. It was not merely their overstrictness that produced immorality by reaction, it was their complicity with tyranny, the share they had had in the destruction of English liberty. As much as it is to be desired that a true religion should control men's politics as well as their private actions, so much the invasion of politics by a crude, confused religious system is to be feared. When a nation has trusted itself to religion, and has been duped, a violent reaction against all religion cannot but set in. The low tone of the Restoration period, the profound mistrust of anything like enthusiasm which reigned for a good century afterwards, had its origin not in the Restoration itself, but in the reign of the Sects, in the grand disappointment of a nation which, by following the party of religion, had lost its liberties.

If I have pursued this subject so far, though it was introduced only by way of illustration, this is because nothing could illustrate more fully my view of the manner in which a corruption of history causes by contagion a corruption of politics. First under pretext of a prophetic gift which has a right to dispense with precision and with logic, a flood of rhetoric and of bastard poetry is let loose over the most important historical subjects. This loose mode of treatment does not, as is supposed, merely affect insignificant details, but blurs or completely misrepresents the large outlines of history. That the military government was a tyranny seems as evident now to those who look calmly at the facts as it seemed evident to almost all Englishmen for a century and a half. But let the subject be treated in a literary manner, that is, let pictures be substituted for reasonings, let persons and

characters occupy the foreground and political reflexion be made subordinate, taking always the form of hints, or short, impassioned comments, or poetical rhapsodies, and it is quite possible to make Cromwellism wear a splendid and glorious appearance. The misrepresentation is at first allowed to pass, because before a public so indifferent to history no historical question can be seriously tried, and then a new generation quietly adopts it because it is more cheerful, more animating, more poetical than the old view. But in adopting it they insensibly adopt a whole scheme of politics, which condemns all the traditional politics of the country. To say that the Great Rebellion was glorious, and the Revolution of 1688 a feeble compromise, is to repudiate in one word what may be called the English method in politics and to adopt the French method in its place. It is to abandon the politics of statesmen for the politics of literary men, for indeed Rebellion *v.* Revolution is the test-question between the two schools. The Rebellion represents the policy of strong sensations, intense action and passion, affording rich materials to the romancer, but completely unsuccessful, creating a strong tyranny in the effort to resist a weak one, repudiated at last by the whole nation, and consigned to oblivion for more than a century; the Revolution disappoints romancers, but it arrests the attention of political students as furnishing the unique example of a nation in extreme excitement doing precisely the thing it wished to do, and neither more nor less.

But if this ready adoption of Carlylian eccentricities is in itself unworthy of advanced politicians, in particular instances they proclaim it in a style which is positively alarming from the confusion of thought, the helpless somnambulism which it betrays. For they bring up the name of Cromwell at a moment when they are crusading against "imperialism," against jingoism, and the spirited foreign policy, and when they wish to hint that the time

is at hand when it will be desirable to substitute republicanism for monarchy. Now whatever may be open to question in Cromwell's career, it is surely not doubtful that on the one occasion in which Englishmen have tried the experiment of a republic it was Cromwell who stepped forward to crush it, that, having crushed it, he proceeded to reconstruct the monarchy, that, in doing so, he showed a manifest intention of abiding by the old form, and in particular that he restored the House of Lords, but that so far as the Cromwellian monarchy differed from the old English monarchy, it differed by having a much larger infusion of imperialism, and as a natural consequence distinguished itself specially in the department of foreign affairs. The founder of English imperialism and the inventor, if not of jingoism, yet certainly of the spirited foreign policy, is cited with triumph by the opponents of both at the very moment when they are opposing them most warmly!

It is time to collect the results of this paper. 'We are not political philosophers.' This does not mean that we are less so than most other nations, nor yet that there is not among us a vast amount of political knowledge of a certain kind; nor again that there are not individuals, perhaps fully as numerous as in other countries, whose political knowledge is profound. But it means that the profound knowledge of the few, and the large command of detail on special questions possessed by many, do not together constitute an adequate national knowledge of politics when the larger political questions are thrown open. At such times great masses of men ought to be—what is most difficult—political thinkers, and I have urged—

First, that the majority of the working classes are childishly ignorant of the larger political questions. When we are told that our working classes are disposed, almost too much disposed, to learn from their betters and from those who are wiser than themselves, I believe it is overlooked that a little

education and a little power fatally destroy such half-animal docility. Look at Germany, where the same disposition to reverence and loyalty was once stronger than in England, and see the coarse and furious contempt for all tradition that has sprung up since the introduction of universal suffrage. But, secondly, I urge—

That in the educated classes, putting aside the few who devote themselves to politics, there is much less trustworthy and precise knowledge of political principles than is commonly supposed. Our education runs off to classics, belles-lettres, and art on the one side, and to exact science on the other, so that on politics, and that part of history which is closely connected with politics, that is, recent history, they are at the mercy of the fashionable historians of the day, being wholly unable to test the views which such historians put before them. And, thirdly, I have urged—

That in the department of recent history our writers, being dependent for their literary success on the suffrages of the general public, have been compelled to adopt a low standard. They have formed the habit of regarding themselves as popular writers or writers for the young, and have accordingly put all their force into narration and florid description, so as to become, in one word, rather men of style than men of science. The result of this has been not merely to damage the quality of history, but to pervert its judgments to an infinite extent by substituting the literary for the properly political estimate of public men and public actions. And as practically our opinions on the larger political questions depend upon rough conclusions drawn from the more conspicuous historical phenomena, the corruption of history has caused a corruption of the political views of the educated class.

These evils are closely connected among themselves, yet they are not equally easy to remedy. One of them,

however, and that, in my view, the worst of all, if it were once fully recognised, would be remedied without difficulty. The corruption of history has an obvious cause in the absence of any sufficient *corps* of specialists among whom the true notion of history might be preserved, and to whose judgment historians might appeal with confidence. Any other serious study would decline as history has declined if it were left to itself as history has been left. If astronomy were handed over to the judgment of the general public, Airy and Adams would be obliged to give up the use of symbols, and to publish charming poetical books upon the wonders of the heavens; if geology were in the same condition, Ramsay and Geikie would devote themselves to producing nice little volumes on the pleasures of the sea-shore, adapted to amuse families during their summer holiday. History only needs to be protected as other serious studies are protected, or rather it is only one section of history that needs to be so protected. The corruption does not extend to ancient history, where Grote and Curtius and Mommsen have met with due appreciation; even mediæval history is affected by it only in a secondary degree, for we are all proud of Professor Stubbs, though not by any means so proud as we ought to be. It is only the recent periods that have been invaded by the literary romancing school, and in which that school is supported by the enthusiastic favour of the public. Unfortunately these are just the periods in which the domain of history confines with that of politics.

This evil, then, would be in a great degree remedied by a considerable increase in the number of teachers and students at the universities, or lecturers proceeding from the universities, who should devote themselves to this part of history; and as the study of history in general is advancing in the universities, this result will be secured if only the special importance of the recent periods is properly

recognised. When this is done, the time will soon arrive when the body of specialists will be strong enough to guide the popular judgment. More, no doubt, would still be needed to give the study a full degree of vitality and independence, and we must look forward with hope to a time when modern studies on a large scale shall be established in schools as well as in universities. In those days modern history will flourish between modern languages and modern literatures, and there will be some chance of curing nations of their somnambulism when each generation shall be taught seriously and thoroughly to know the world in which it is to live.

In those days the second evil too will be remedied. Not only will history be cured by being put into the hands of specialists, but at the same time the large mass of educated men will be able to form on political questions not merely a common-sense judgment—this is not enough when the questions at issue are fundamental—but a learned judgment. They will be in possession of all the results at which political thinkers have arrived, and in possession also of the facts of history, by which I do not mean the facts of biography, nor yet merely the famous occurrences of history, but the development of institutions and the precise process by which states have prospered or decayed. But even before that time arrives, if only the students of recent history can become more numerous and more influential, an approximation to this result may be made, and the educated class, by having a larger admixture of historical specialists, may make a perceptible advance in the clearness of their political views.

The other evil, it must be confessed, is in its nature irremediable. It is impossible even to conceive the great mass of the working classes educated to the point of having a sound judgment on questions of national policy. Still perhaps even here something

may be done. The great danger lies in the sanguine extravagance of opinion natural to a class which has no intellectual experience. Their politics are likely to be the politics of impulse or passion, or if of thought, then of unpractised thought, that is, thought misled by empty generalities, and judging of things *sur l'étiquette du sac*, by the label on the bag. Now it is the special function of science to correct this very class of errors, to teach the lesson that impulse and passion are not safe guides unless they are combined with clear knowledge, and that thought without method leads to mere fanaticism. And since on the other hand it is the special study of party politics to practise on these errors, to appeal recklessly to popular impulse, and to play with ambiguous words, there is

here surely an opportunity for science to do real good in the field of politics. The universities might extend their influence even more widely than they have yet done. Not by interfering directly in party strife, but by peaceful teaching, by introducing definition and precision where only loose declamation has hitherto been heard, by drawing from history not romantic blustering stories, but information about the experiments that have been tried in politics, and the degree of success that has attended them, it seems that much might be done to diffuse the conviction, above all things calculated to correct extravagance, that politics are a difficult, an anxious art, an art in which disaster is the normal result of declamation, party violence, and romantic history.

J. R. SEELEY.

TROUBADOURS ANCIENT AND MODERN.

THE good old-fashioned idea of the troubadour—as the minstrel of love going from land to land singing his song and twanging his guitar with no object in view but the praise of beauty, and no rule to entammel his passionate effusion—has by this time been pretty generally abandoned. It is or should be known to all students of literature, that Provençal poets, so far from being wholly wrapt up in their love-thought, took on the contrary a keen and active interest in the affairs of their day; that indeed their literary as well as their social importance depends quite as much on their slashing and bitter satire as on their always sweet but frequently monotonous and conventional love-songs. But still more mistaken is the notion that the troubadour as the singer of pure passion was unfettered by any rules and canons of art. It may indeed be said that he was the representative of art, or if the reader prefers it, artificiality, in its strictest and most highly developed sense. The metres invented and used with consummate skill by the poets of mediæval Provence remain a wonder of symmetry and technical perfection in the history of literature, unequalled by the poets of other nations who successively tried to imitate them.

For it may truly be said that in matters metrical the troubadours became the schoolmasters of Europe. In that capacity they were acknowledged and revered by the great poets of Italy, by Dante and Petrarch, while the singers of northern France, the *trouvères*, although submitting more or less consciously to the same influence, observed a discreet silence on the point. Through the medium of French, and in a more limited degree of Italian, literature, the metrical lore of Provence was transmitted to those singers of our own time and country

whom in the heading of this essay I have ventured to designate as modern troubadours. Amongst the latest school of English poetry the adoption of complicated foreign metres has become a passion and a creed. Rondeaux and rondels, vilanelles, and triolets have been naturalised, and in a certain sense acclimatised by our younger bards, and conservative critics have lamented over the degeneracy of modern days, ruefully pointing to the good old times when English poets would have scorned to borrow their metres from the foreigner. There, however, the critics were wrong—historically wrong at least. There had been a previous invasion of the same foreign element infinitely more important than the one which we are witnessing at present, and in an age too which patriotic lovers of literature regard as the acme of English poetry—I mean, of course, the reign of Elizabeth. That great time not only gave us the romantic epic and the drama, but it also introduced us to the sonnet and many other Italian verse-forms: and through the same sources too. Spenser and Shakespeare, the two representative names of the time, also stand at the head of the revival of form inaugurated by the foreign movement above-mentioned. It is true that neither of them adopted the strange importation with slavish accuracy. They recast the beauty of Italian rhyme in accordance with the genius of the language and their own. In this manner we see the Spenserian stanza grow out of the ottava rima of Ariosto, and the Shakespearean sonnet out of that of Dante and of Petrarch. For that origin it does not belie, although it must be owned that Shakespeare in his remodelling process has used the utmost liberty, one might say license.

It is curious that Shakespeare and

Shakespeare Societies have never thought it worth while to investigate, or at least have never succeeded in fathoming, the true relations between the so-called sonnet of Shakespeare and the Italian verse-form of the same name. To accomplish such a task one must understand the structural principle of the sonnet, and for that purpose it is necessary to study Dante's treatise *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, which, apart from being very little known is, I must confess, anything but lively reading. At the same time it is the fountain-head from which alone a true insight into the metrical system of the Romance languages—which in most essential points is also that of our own—can be derived. Dante, who was what every lyrical poet by rights should be—a musician—was fully aware of the identity of musical and metrical laws; and many of the expressions he uses with regard to the latter had, in his, and have even in our own time, a musical significance.

Dante divides a stanza, if it is divisible at all, into two sections, which again may be subdivided in various ways. The chief caesura of the stanza always coinciding with a pause in the sentence is called the *volta*, and the subdivisions, before or after it, are created by the repetition of certain metrical and melodic forms. If these groups occur before the *volta* they are called "*pedes*," if after, they are called "*versus*." On the other hand, if the opening part is not subdivided at all it is called "*frons*," and if the final portion is sung to one continuous tune it receives the name "*cauda*," which survives in our "*coda*." An example will best illustrate the meaning of these terms. Let us take a stanza from Don Juan, written, the reader is aware, in the ottava-rima:—

{ "How long in this damp trance young
 Juan lay
 { He knew not, for the earth was gone
 from him,
 { And Time had nothing more of night nor
 day
 { For his congealing blood and senses dim :

{ And how this heavy faintness passed
 away
 { He knew not till each painful pulse and
 limb,
 { And tingling vein seemed throbbing back
 to life,
 { For Death, though vanished, still retired
 with strife."

The chief break or *volta* in this stanza occurs after the sixth verse, and according to strict rule it would require a stronger mark of punctuation than the comma Byron has vouchsafed. The six verses before this *volta* are divided into three couplets exactly corresponding with each other as regards rhyme, and sung—as the old poems in similar metres no doubt were sung—to one and the same melodic phrase, ending most probably in the dominant key so as to facilitate the repetition. The final couplet introduces a new rhyme, and, it may be concluded, a new melodic phrase which serves by way of climax and conclusion. The stanza, therefore, consists in Dante's terminology of three *pedes* of two lines each, and of a *cauda* of the same number of lines. Applying the same rule to the sonnet in its regular form, we find that its *volta* occurs after the eighth line, that it has two *pedes* of four lines each, and a *cauda* of six. Shakespeare, for reasons best known to himself, was not pleased with this correct form of the Italian sonnet, which he accordingly remodelled in his own autocratic fashion. In the first instance he does not think it necessary to adhere to the number of rhymes which in the orthodox sonnet are repeated in the two *pedes*; the order of these rhymes also he changes with equal freedom. More than this, he has added one to the number of these *pedes*, and therefore transferred the *volta* or chief pause from the eighth to the twelfth line, leaving only the final couplet for the *cauda*. His sonnet, therefore, instead of two *pedes* of four lines each and a *cauda* of six, contains three *pedes* of four lines each and a *cauda* of two. In other words, the structural principle of the original sonnet has been entirely changed, only

the number of lines of the Italian being retained. The reader will at once perceive the difference if he will compare any one of the immortal 154 with Milton's *Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints*, or the famous sonnet penned by Keats, *On first looking into Chapman's Homer*. And the matter is of greater importance than would appear at first sight. It is too frequently said that Shakespeare¹ wrote "irregular" sonnets, in other words, that he bungled, instead of which, he enriched poetic literature by a new form of his own creation as capable of harmonious development as the original itself.

It is different with a great many other English sonneteers both before Shakespeare and after him. The original position of the rhyme in the first section has been changed, and one or even two new rhymes have been introduced into the second quatrain for no better reason than that consonant final syllables are more scarce in English than in Italian. Such an excuse appears extremely weak. There is no necessity for writing sonnets, and those who cannot find the necessary rhyme-words had infinitely better refrain. So, at least, one would think but for the undeniable fact that some of the finest sonnets in the language show the defect alluded to. It would be easy to cite many cases in point from the works of modern poets, not excepting Keats, who, in the lines addressed to Reynolds, *O thou whose face*, has actually accomplished a sonnet without any rhymes, and, *mirabile dictu!* D. G. Rossetti. But perhaps it will serve

¹ I am, of course, aware that the form of the Shakespearean sonnet in its essential features had previously been used by the Earl of Surrey, who, most probably, was its inventor. At the same time these early attempts are metrically so crude and inaccurate that the establishment of the form and its permanent place in literature are undoubtedly due to Shakespeare, who, if not the earliest, is at least infinitely the greatest representative of the form of the sonnet generally called after him. Conscientious readers, however, may, if they prefer, put the name of Surrey instead of Shakespeare in the above remarks.

the reader's purpose better to listen to an earlier and less known, but by no means despicable, sonneteer, Drummond of Hawthornden. The following lines deviate in every respect from the orthodox form of the sonnet adhered to, for example, by Milton, who besides being a mighty poet was also a profound metrical scholar. At the same time it would be impossible to deny that they show the peculiarities of Drummond's style in a favourable light:—

SONNET.

"With grief in heart, and tears in swooning
eyes,
When I to her had giv'n a sad farewell,
Close sealed with a kiss, and dew which fell
On my else-moistened face from beauty's
skies,
So strange amazement did my mind surprise
That at each pace I fainting turned again,
Like one whom a torpedo stupefies,
Not feeling honour's bit, nor reason's rein.
But when fierce stars to part me did constrain
With back-cast looks I envied both and
blest'd
The happy walls and place did her contain,
Till that sight's shafts their flying object
miss'd.
So wailing parted Ganymede the fair
When eagles' talons bare him through the
air."

Anything more misshapen than the construction of this stanza cannot well be imagined. It is a kind of cross between the Shakespearean and the Italian sonnet, indicating the principles of both only sufficiently to let us feel their collapse in a hopeless confusion of rhymes. It may be added, although by no means in excuse of Drummond's negligence, that when so minded he was quite capable of turning out a very fair specimen of the orthodox sonnet.

The name of Drummond of Hawthornden suggests another foreign verse form, of which he also is amongst the earliest and most prominent representatives in this country. This is the *sestina*. The *sestina*, like the sonnet, comes to us from Italy, but, unlike the sonnet, it is not of Italian origin. Unlike the sonnet, also, it can trace its birth to a well-known poet,

Arnaut Daniel, one of the most celebrated troubadours of the thirteenth century. Arnaut's fame rests on a far safer basis than his own works, as far as they have been preserved to us, could furnish. Dante has introduced him in the *Purgatorio*, where the Italian poet Guido Guicicelli speaks of his Provençal brother bard in terms of highest praise, calling him a "great smith of his mother-tongue, unsurpassed in love-song or romance." As very little of Arnaut Daniel is known in this country, a short account of his life, as transmitted by the old manuscripts, will probably be welcome to the reader, were it only as a brief respite from the technical disquisitions to which he has been treated.

"Arnaut Daniel," his Provençal biographer says, "was born at Castle Ribeyrac, in the diocese of Perigord, and he was gentle born. He was a good student, and took delight in writing poetry, and he left his studies and became a joglar (wandering minstrel). And he acquired a certain manner of writing in difficult rhymes, for which reason his songs are by no means easy to understand or to learn by heart. And he loved a high-born lady of Gascony, the wife of Lord William of Boville; but it was thought that the lady never granted him any favour of love, for which reason he says, 'I am Arnaut who loves the air, and I hunt the hare with the ox, and swim against the stream.'

"And it happened that he was at the court of King Richard of England; and there being also at the court another joglar, the latter boasted that he could invent rhymes as scarce as could Arnaut. Arnaut thought this good fun, and each gave his horse as a pledge to the king in case he should lose the bet. And the king locked them up each in a room. And Sir Arnaut, being tired of the matter, was unable to string one word to another; the joglar made his song with ease and speedily. And they had only ten days allowed to them. And the king was to judge at the end of five days.

When the joglar asked Sir Arnaut if he had finished, 'Oh, yes,' said Sir Arnaut, 'three days ago.' But he had not given the matter a thought. And the joglar sang his song every night so as to know it well. And Arnaut thought how he could draw him into ridicule; so one night, while the joglar was singing, Arnaut took care to remember the whole song and the tune. And when they were before the king, Arnaut declared that he wished to sing his song first, and began to sing in excellent style the song the joglar had made. And the joglar, when he heard this, stared him in the face and declared that he himself had made the song. And the king asked how that was possible; but the joglar implored him to inquire into the truth of the matter. The king then asked Sir Arnaut how it had happened, and Sir Arnaut told him the whole story. And the king had great joy at this, and thought it most excellent fun. And the pledges were returned, and to each he made rich presents."

The amusing anecdote just related, which, in a modified way, and no doubt by mere coincidence, is part of the plot of Wagner's *Meistersinger*, is little in accord with the general tenor of Arnaut's life, as far at least as it is reflected in his poetry. He has been called the Browning of Provençal literature; his train of thought is severe, his language purposely obscure, and his rhymes fully deserve the term "cars,"—scarce or unusual,—which the old critics apply to them. Arnaut himself was fully aware of all this, and he gives an excellent reason for it. It is the unkindness of his lady, he says, which makes his speech harsh, and his metre difficult. Should she incline her ear to him he would soon sing the gayest love-song in the most harmonious measure.

However that may be, his peculiarity of style brought him such literary fame as must to some extent have atoned for the cruelty of his mistress. The way in which he is

mentioned by contemporary poets and satirists plainly shows the esteem in which he was held, and that esteem was not limited to his own time or country. Dante, as has already been mentioned, places him above all other troubadours, and moreover has paid him the practical compliment of imitating one of his favourite metres, viz. the sestina, or sextain, above referred to. Dante's example was followed by Petrarch, and it is no doubt through their means that the sestina reached this country. Sir Philip Sidney, one of the earliest representatives of the sonnet, is, as far as I am aware, responsible for the introduction of the sestina, of which there are several specimens in his works. He even improved on his models by writing what he calls a "dizain" (showing the principle of the sestina applied to stanzas of ten instead of six lines), also a double sestina, the difficulties of the achievement being of course considerably increased in this manner. Drummond of Hawthornden, as has already been indicated, is another early writer of sestinas, which he also modifies according to his own taste. After him the sestina seems to have sunk into neglect until the modern foreign revival, when it was restored to its old honours by Mr. Swinburne, and more recently still by Mr. E. W. Gosse. A form of poetry which has attracted so many writers in so many countries—for in France and Germany also it is naturalised—cannot be altogether without merits, and therefore well deserves our passing attention.

The sestina is a dangerous experiment, on which only poets of the first rank should venture. It is a man-trap well adapted to keep irresponsible intruders from the garden of poetry. Only in the first stanza is the poet

a free agent; after that he is held by his own selection as in a vice: he has signed his bond, and by that he must abide. To speak without metaphor, the sestina is founded on the principle of what the French call *bouts-rimés*, or given rhymes, with the difference, however, that the poet is permitted in the first stanza to select his own rhymes, or rather ends of verse, which he has to repeat in all the subsequent stanzas according to a certain scheme. There are, as the name indicates, six lines to a stanza and six stanzas to a poem, not counting the tornada or envoi of three lines, in which all the six verse-ends of the preceding stanzas have to occur. To illustrate the order in which the repetition of the rhymes takes place, it will be advisable to quote at least two stanzas from what is most likely the first sestina in the English language. It is named "Agelastus' Sestina," and occurs in the Countess of Pembroke's *Arcadia*, by Sir Philip Sidney:—

"Since wayling is a bud of causefull sorrow,
Since sorrow is the follower of ill-fortune;
Since no ill-fortune equals publike damage;
Now Prince's loss hath made our damage
publike
Sorrow pay we to thee the rights of Nature,
And inward grief seal up with outward
wayling.

"Why should we spare our voice from endlesse
wayling
Who iustly make our hearts the seate of
sorrow
In such a case, where it appears that Nature
Doth add her force unto the sting of Fortune!
Choosing, alas, this our theatre publike
Where they would leave trophées of cruell
damage."

The ends of the lines are, the reader will perceive, identical in the two stanzas, but their sequence is of course entirely different. On comparison we find that

Sorrow, the first verse-end in the first stanza is the second in the second.					
Fortune, the second	"	"	"	fourth	"
Damage, the third	"	"	"	sixth	"
Publike, the fourth	"	"	"	fifth	"
Nature, the fifth	"	"	"	third	"
Wayling, the sixth	"	"	"	first	"

By reducing the result of this comparison to a formula we have the following:—

1	first stanza	=	2	second stanza.
2	"	=	4	"
3	"	=	6	"
4	"	=	5	"
5	"	=	3	"
6	"	=	1	"

And this formula expresses exactly the relation of each stanza in the sestina to its predecessor, of the third to the second, of the fourth to the third, of the fifth to the fourth, and of the sixth to the fifth. The reader therefore has here a complete receipt for composing a sestina, to which he has only to add the slight ingredient of genius to make it a beautiful poem. That ingredient is by no means wanting in some of the English specimens. Mr. Swinburne has written some lovely sestinas, both in English and French, the latter I have no doubt being by far the finest and most melodious examples in that language. Unfortunately, however, I cannot but add that he has looked for his model, not in the works of Dante or the troubadours, but in some more modern source. The lines in the original sestina do, as the reader will have observed, not rhyme with each other in the same stanza. They have to wait for their consonance till the next following stanza, and in this continual playing at hide-and-seek of the rhyme-words the charm of the sestina—the “humour of it”—consists. By matching them in each stanza, and thus making that stanza a whole in itself, you destroy the principle of reciprocity and interdependence, which is in this case simply indispensable. This course, however, has been followed by Mr. Swinburne, and not by him alone. Many years ago M. de Gramont, a learned French poet, published a sestina of this kind in the *Revue Parisienne*, edited by Balzac, who turned critic for the nonce, and expounded to his readers the beauties of the ancient form and of its modern adaptation. Théodore de Banville, in his *Petit Traité de la Poésie Française*,

quotes De Gramont's poem, and adds that this particular treatment of the sestina is borrowed from Petrarch, proving in that manner that he has never read that poet. There was, however, another and a very good precedent of whose existence neither Balzac nor de Banville ever dreamt. This is none other than our friend Drummond of Hawthornden, who has left us a very pretty sextain with rhyming verse-ends. One stanza at least may be quoted by way of illustration:—

“The heaven doth not contain so many stars,
So many leaves not prostrate lie in woods,
When autumn's old and Boreas sounds his wars,
So many waves have not the ocean floods,
As my rent heart hath torments all the night
And heart-spent sighs when Phoebus brings the light.”

Whether Mr. Swinburne in his treatment of the sestina has followed Drummond or Gramont, or has acted independently of either, certain it is that by introducing the rhyme into the single stanzas he has sacrificed structural consistency to beauty of sound. The only modern poet who, as far as I am aware, has written a correct sestina after the manner of Arnaut Daniel is Mr. E. W. Gosse, who in his recent volume (*New Poems*, Kegan Paul) has given welcome proof that mastery of foreign form may coexist with simple and genuine English feeling. To his sestina the honour of a quotation in full is justly due.

“In fair Provence, the land of lute and rose,
Arnaut, great master of the lore of love,
First wrought sestines to win his lady's heart,
For she was deaf when simpler staves he sang,
And for her sake he broke the bonds of rhyme,
And in this subtler measure hid his woe.

“‘Harsh be my lines,’ cried Arnaut, ‘harsh the woe—
My lady, that enthroned and cruel rose,
Inflicts on him that made her live in rhyme.’

But through the metre spake the voice of
Love,
And like a wild-wood nightingale he sang,
Who thought in crabbed lays to ease his
heart.

"It is not told if her untoward heart
Was melted by her poet's lyric woe,
Or if in vain so amorously he sang ;
Perchance through cloud of dark conceits
he rose
To nobler heights of philosophic love,
And crowned his later years with sterner
rhyme.

"This thing alone we know : the triple rhyme
Of him who bared his vast and passionate
heart
To all the crossing flames of hate and love,
Wears in the midst of all its storm of woe—
As some loud morn of March may bear a
rose,—
The impress of a song that Arnaut sang.

" 'Smith of his mother tongue,' the French-
man sang
Of Lancelot and of Galahad, the rhyme
That beat so bloodlike at its core of rose,
It stirred the sweet Francesca's gentle heart
To take that kiss that brought her so much
woe,
And sealed in fire her martyrdom of love.

"And Dante, full of her immortal love,
Stayed his drear song, and softly, fondly
sang
As though his voice broke with that weight
of woe ;
And to this day we think of Arnaut's rhyme
Whenever pity at the labouring heart
On fair Francesca's memory drops the rose.

"Ah ! sovereign Love, forgive this weaker
rhyme !
The men of old who sang were great at
heart,
Yet have we too known woe, and worn thy
rose."

We have hitherto considered the
three important verseforms which
English poetry owes to Italy, the
ottava-rima, the sonnet, and the
sestina ; for the latter also, although
of Provençal origin, came to us, as
we have seen, through the medium of
Italian genius. To make this essay
complete, it would now be incumbent
on me to speak of the metrical ac-
quisitions we owe to the mediæval
poets of northern France, the
trouvères. Fortunately it is un-
necessary to put the reader's patience
to so severe a test. The Triolet, the

Rondeau and Rondel, the Chant Royal,
and whatever their names may be,
have been written about so much of
late, that any one interested in the
subject may easily inform himself of all
that is needful. There is, for example
—to mention only the most accessible
sources—the very excellent *Petit Traité*
of Théodore de Banville already re-
ferred to, and, still more handy, an
able article in the *Cornhill Magazine*,
which contains in a concise form the
substance of the French book, with
the addition of some English ex-
amples. The short essay, "On Some
Foreign Forms of Verse," by Mr.
Austin Dobson (himself an adept),
printed in Mr. Davenport Adams's
collection of *Latter Day Lyrics*, will
also be found useful.

The grace and neatness of these
dainty metres I am the last to deny.
They are useful also as a practical
lesson of the value of strict form.
Even an irregular sonnet, as we have
seen, may be a fine poem ; but every
one will admit that a halting rondel
or virelai is simply an abomination.
Moreover, Villon and others have
shown that even for the reception of
pathos and sentiment these forms are
by no means unadapted. It is further
agreeable to mention that our English
poets have not been surpassed by
their French rivals as regards both the
accuracy and the consummate skill with
which the metrical resources placed at
their disposal have been turned to
account. Such a poem as the follow-
ing triolet, by Mr. Robert Bridges,
is perfect of its kind. Note espe-
cially the subtle *nuance* which gives
a slightly different meaning to each
occurrence of the refrain :—

"When first we met we did not guess
That Love would prove so hard a master ;
Of more than common friendliness
When first we met we did not guess.
Who could fortell this sore distress,
This irretrievable disaster,
When first we met ? We did not guess
That Love would prove so hard a master."

And this is by no means a solitary
instance of skill. The names of some of

the best of our younger poets, Arthur O'Shaughnessy, John Payne, E. W. Gosse, T. Marzials, Andrew Lang, Austin Dobson, and Miss Mary Robinson immediately suggest themselves in this connection. These and others may claim to be the worthy successors of Charles d'Orleans who, centuries ago, beguiled the weary hours of his English captivity with rondels and rondeaux full of tender sweetness. Scarcely less quaint than the broken English of the French prince is the Scotch rondel in which Mr. Lang celebrates the good old-fashioned game of golf (XXII. *Ballades in Blue China*; Kegan Paul, 1880).

But, admitting all this and more, it cannot be said that the gain to be derived from trifles of this kind amounts to much. The stanzas of the troubadours, and of the great Italian poets, are organically developed; they are as rich and as varied as the musical ideas from which originally they were inseparable. The canzoniere of Dante, or Petrarch, or Boccaccio, reveal metrical ideas which in the hands of a modern poet might be still further developed and bear rich fruit. But no such development is possible where not rhythms but words are repeated, and where the principle from which it is derived is as monotonous as that prevailing in all the poems we are now speaking of. For it is easy to see, although M. de Banville and his disciples fail to see it, that the triolet, the rondeau, the rondel, and even the much-venerated Chant Royal, are but variations of one and the same metrical theme, namely, the refrain. The refrain, that is the repetition of

the same verse at the end of each stanza, is of great importance in mediæval French poetry, which owes some of its sweetest and simplest effects to it. In the late Middle Ages, when the poetry, of France and the world generally had lost much of its raciness and freshness, artificialities began to take the place of inspiration; for it must be remembered that the verse-forms so popular in the time of Villon were unknown to the genuine *trouvères*. The later poets soon discovered the resources of the refrain, and turned it to further account with much ingenuity. It will indeed be seen on closer investigation that in all these late French forms the repetition of a word or words, or entire lines, is a *sine quâ non*. There is besides this, also, a certain rule as to the length of the stanza, the sequence of the rhymes, and so forth; but all that is more or less incidental. The essential and permanent principle remains the refrain, that is, the repetition of certain words in certain parts of the stanza according to a given scheme. Now such a repetition may in certain circumstances be of excellent effect; but it may also prove a very serious impediment, and one for which there is no real organic necessity. In other words, the verse-forms we are speaking of are little more than playthings, which only the genius of certain poets has been able to lift to the sphere of serious literature. They rank at best with the sestina, certainly not with the sonnet, the ottava-rima, or the beautiful stanzas which some of the troubadours have left us.

F. HUEFFER.

HE THAT WILL NOT WHEN HE MAY.

CHAPTER XLII.

AFTER these events an interval of great quiet occurred at Markham. Paul went to town, where he was understood to be reading for the bar, like most other young men, or preparing for a public office—opinions being divided as to which it was. Naturally Sir William Markham's son found no difficulty in getting any opening into life which the mania of examination permitted. Indeed there were friends of his father's very anxious to get him into parliament, and "push him on" into the higher branches of the public service; but he had not yet sufficiently recovered from the rending and tearing of the past to make this possible. He was inseparable from one of his Oxford comrades, a young fellow whom nobody knew, a young Croesus, the son of some City man, who had judiciously died and left him, unencumbered by any vulgar relations, with an immense fortune. It already began to be said by people who saw the young men together, that no doubt Lady Markham would be wise enough to secure this fine fortune for Alice; but at present, of course, in the first blackness of their mourning, nothing could be definitely arranged on this subject. Paul lived in London, at first moodily enough, resenting the great harm that had been done him, but afterwards not so badly on the whole. He had lost a great deal certainly, but not anything that takes the comfort out of actual life. He was as well lodged, and had his wants as comfortably supplied as if he had been Sir Paul Markham. Hard as his reverses had been upon him, they had not plunged him into privations, and indeed it is possible that young Paul in a public office would have as much real enjoyment

of his life as any landed baronet or county magnate, perhaps more; but then for Paul, if he wanted to "settle," for Paul married and middle-aged, the case would be very different; unless indeed he married money, which he showed very little inclination to do.

Spears sailed in the end of October with his younger daughters, Janet having first been married with much solemnity to her master at the shop, who gave her a very gorgeous house, with more gilding about it than any house in the neighbourhood, and dressed her so that she was a sight to see. Her father never pretended to understand the history of the tie which had been formed, he could not tell how, and broken in the same mysterious way. He had a vague consciousness that he ought to have done or said something in the matter, but how was he to do it? And all is well that ends well. Before the emigrants sailed, Fairfax appeared suddenly and renewed his anxious desire to take those shares in the undertaking which Spears had not permitted Paul to retain. Fairfax protested that it was as a speculation he did it, and that nowhere could he find a better way of investing his money. And though Spears was only half deceived, he was at the same time, in spite of himself, elated by this profession of confidence, which restored the *amour-propre* which had been so deeply wounded, and at the same time restored himself, as the controller of so large an amount of capital, to his right place among the adventurers. He would not have accepted a farthing from Paul, but from that easy-going fellow Fairfax all seemed so natural! Whatever happened he would not mind; but there could be little doubt that the estimate thus formed was entirely true.

Thus quiet fell upon Markham with the winter mists and rains. It was not cheerful there in the midst of the wet woods, when the dark weather closed in without any of the hospitalities and wholesome country diversions which make winter bright. Their sorrow and their mourning only began to reign supreme when all the agitation was stilled, and Paul had settled into his strangely-changed existence, and Sir Augustus had become the master of the house. The only variety the family had was in a sudden visit from the Lennys, husband and wife, who had only heard of all that had passed on their return from a round of the cheap places on the Continent, which was their way of living when they had no visits to make. Mrs. Lenny knew, what so few of us know, where these cheap places were, and had eaten funny foreign dinners, and knew how to choose what was the best in them, in many an out-of-the-way corner. They had been in Germany and Switzerland, appearing now and then at a watering-place, as a seal comes to the surface to take breath. And it was not till nearly Christmas that they heard all that had happened. Mrs. Lenny came and threw herself upon Lady Markham's shoulder and wept. "If I had known, my dear lady, if I had known the trouble that was coming on your dear family through me and mine!" the good woman said. As for Colonel Lenny, he could not speak to Lady Markham, but went off with the boys, who were at home for the holidays, after one silent grasp of her hand; but his wife talked and cried, and cried and talked all the afternoon through.

"And don't blame poor Will Markham more than you can help," she said. "It was a baby when he left the island, and what does a young man think of a baby? It doesn't seem to count at all. And then my brother had adopted the little thing. It didn't seem as if it belonged to him."

This appeal to her on behalf of her

own husband, wounded Lady Markham almost as much as blame.

"I understand how it was," she replied with proud stoicism; though even at that moment, in hearing him thus defended, there glanced across Lady Markham's mind a sense of the wrong he had done which was almost intolerable to her. Thus the mind works by contradiction, seeing most distinctly that which it is called upon not to see. Afterwards, Mrs. Lenny told her the whole story of Gus's young mother, and her love and death, which she listened to with a strange feeling that she herself was the girl who was being talked of, who had died so young.

"He was no better than a lad himself," Mrs. Lenny said; "I don't doubt that it was like a dream to him. When Lenny and I talked to him first he did not seem to understand about the boy."

"You talked to him then—about—his son?"

"That was what we came for, surely," said Mrs. Lenny; "that was what we came for. We knew nothing about you, my dear lady, and we didn't know there was a family. When I heard of your fine young gentleman that was to be the heir,—God bless him!—you might have knocked me down with a straw; and I told Will he should make a clean breast of it. But do you think a man, and a great statesman, would take a woman's advice? They think they know better, and he would not. He thought nothing would ever happen, poor Will! And here it's come upon you like a tempest, without a word of warning."

"We will say no more about it," said Lady Markham.

If she could she would have obliterated the story from everybody's memory; instead of dwelling upon her wrongs it was her pride to ignore them. It was intolerable to her to think that all the world of her acquaintance must have discussed her and her husband, and all that had happened, as Mrs. Lenny, with the best of in-

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tentions and the kindest of thoughts, was doing. She put a stop to the conversation pointedly, leading her companion to other subjects; and though she was more kind to them than ever, and treated those kind and innocent Bohemians as if, Mrs. Lenny said, they had been the governor and his lady, she did not encourage any return to this subject. As for Gus, though he had scarcely any recollection of them, he was very glad to see these relations, who knew so much more about him than any of his family did. Colonel Lenny was a godsend to him in the dark winter days. He could hardly make up his mind to let them go. But the Lennys were too much accustomed to wandering, and too determined, whatever might be wanting to them, that a little amusement never should be wanting, to relish the gloom of Markham in its mourning. When they went away, Mrs. Lenny whispered a solemn intimation, of which it was difficult to say whether it was a warning or a prophecy, into Lady Markham's ear. "He'll not stand it long," she said. Her note was half melancholy, half congratulatory, and she nodded and shook her head alternately, looking back as the carriage went down the avenue upon the group at the great door. Lady Markham, with a shawl round her, was as fair in her matronly beauty as ever, though a little paler than of old. She was not afraid of the chill, but stood there waving her hand to her departing guests till they were out of sight. But Sir Gus withdrew shivering to his fire, which roared up the chimney night and day, and could never be made big enough to please him. He could not understand what pleasure it could be to any one to encounter that chill air, laden with moisture, out of doors.

The fact was that the English winter was a terrible experience for Sir Gus. He had not contemplated anything so unlike all that he had previously known. He had heard of it,

of course, and knew that there was cold to encounter such as he had never felt before, but he was not aware what were the consequences of that cold, either mental or bodily. He shrank visibly in the midst of his wrappings, and grew leaner and browner as the year went on, and sat shivering close by his great fire when the boys came in glowing with exercise, and the little girls, his favourites, with brilliant roses of winter on their cheeks. "Come out, come out, and you will get warm!" they all cried; but he would not leave his fire. A man more out of place in an English country-house in a severe winter could not be. Gus could do nothing that the other gentlemen did. He neither hunted nor shot, nor even walked or rode. He did not understand English law or customs, to occupy himself with the duties of a magistrate; he did not care about farming; he knew nothing about the preserving of the game, or even the care of the woods. He was fretful when the agent or his clerk came to consult him on any of these subjects. Go out and look at the timber! he only wanted more to burn, to have better and better fires.

By this time the family at Markham had almost begun to forget that Gus was an intruder. There was no more question of Lady Markham's removal to the dower-house. Nothing had been said about it by one or the other, but it had been quietly, practically laid aside, as a visionary scheme impossible in the circumstances. They all lived together calmly, monotonously, in perfect family understanding. Even Alice, who stood out so long against him, had learned to accept Gus. The little girls made him their slave; he was always ready to do anything they wanted, to take them wherever they pleased. But life got to be very heavy upon Gus's hands as these winter days went on. He had nothing to do; he did not even read—that resource of the unoccupied; he had no letters to write, or business

to do like his father, and he soon began to hate the library which had been appropriated to him, notwithstanding its huge fireplace. He was more at home in the soft brightness of the drawing-room, with velvet curtains drawn round him, and the lights reflected in the mirrors and sparkling on the pretty china and ornaments. The ladies found him in their territories more than in his own. He interrupted nothing, but notwithstanding, there, as everywhere, there was nothing for him to do. It was only now and then, not once a day at the most, that there was a skein of silk or of wool to hold for some one. Sometimes he would volunteer to read aloud, but he soon tired of that. He bore this want of occupation very well on the whole, sitting buried in the big bamboo chair, which he had filled with soft cushions, at the corner of the fire in the drawing-room, looking on at all that was doing, and more interested in the needlework than those who worked at it. Poor little gentleman! Sir Gus did not even care for the newspapers; he looked at the little paragraphs of general interest, but turned with a grimace from the long reports of the debates. "What good does all that do me?" he said, when Lady Markham, who was somewhat horrified by his indifference, endeavoured to rouse him to a sense of his duties.

"But it concerns the country," she would say, "and few people have a greater stake in the country."

"That is how Paul would have felt," said Sir Gus; "he would have read all these speeches; he would have understood everything that is said. It would have mattered to him—"

"Indeed it matters to us all," said Lady Markham, with grave dignity. Of all people in the world to listen while a parliamentary debate is talked of with contempt, the wife of a man who was once a Cabinet minister is the last—and all the more if her husband held but a secondary place.

She was half-offended and half-shocked; but Sir Gus could not see the error of his ways. He got all the picture-papers, which he enjoyed along with Bell and Marie, and sent to the boys after, when they were at school. He cared nothing about the game, except to eat it when it was set before him. From morn to chilly eve he would sit by that fire, and note everything that happened. Not a letter arrived but he was there to see how it was received, and what was in it. Lady Markham declared that had she heard anywhere else, or read in a book, of a man who was always in the drawing-room, who had no duties of his own, and who sat and watched everything, the situation would have seemed intolerable. But it was not so intolerable in reality. They got used, at last, to the big bamboo-chair and its inhabitant; they got used to his comments. There was no harm in Sir Gus; but life was hard upon him. Everybody else was doing something—even the little girls in the school-room were learning their lessons—but he, burying himself in the cushions of his chair, showing nothing out of it but two little brown hands, twirling a paper-knife, or a pencil, or anything else he had got hold of, had nothing to do. Sometimes he would get up and walk to the window. When it was fine it would give him much pleasure to watch the birds collecting about the bread-crumbs, which he insisted on scattering everywhere.

"There is a lazy one, like me," he would say; and a little pert robin red-breast, a sort of little almoner, who came and superintended the giving away of these charities, gave Sir Gus the greatest amusement. But the people who came to call were not equally amusing. When a man came, he expected Sir Gus to take an interest in the debates, or in the places where the hounds met, and stared, when he knew that Gus, like Gallio, cared for none of these things. And he was not even interested in the parish. When Dolly Stainforth brought up a report

of some village catastrophe, Sir Gus was not the one who responded with the greatest liberality. He was not used to have very much money to spare, and he was careful of it. It was not that he loved money, but he had not the habit of spending it lavishly, as we foolish people have. Sometimes he would drive out in a close carriage, to the great contempt of everybody concerned.

"The new master, he *be* a muff," the people in the porter's lodge said. Even from that mild exercise, however, he was glad to come in, shivering, and call Brown to put on a great many more coals in the fire. The house was full of schemes for warming it more effectually. Hot water, hot air—all kinds of expedients; and never had so much fuel been used in Markham in the memory of man.

"He will ruin my lady in coals," Brown said; but Sir Gus did not take this into consideration. It was about the greatest pleasure he had in the good fortune which was to make him so happy.

In February there came, as there sometimes comes, a spell of bright weather—a few soft, spring-like days—and the poor little gentleman from the tropics brightened along with the crocuses. "It is over at last," he said, in beatific self-delusion; and he was persuaded to pay a visit to town when Parliament was on the point of meeting, and the general tuning up for the great concert of the season had begun to begin. Here Sir Gus was confided to the charge of Fairfax, who took him into his own house, and roasted him over huge fires, and made little dinners for him, collecting other tropical persons to meet him. But very soon Sir Gus found out that it was not over. He found out that not to be interested in the debates, nor in society, nor in books and pictures, and, above all, not to "know people," were sad drawbacks to life in London. He sat dumb while his companions talked of meeting So-and-so at Lord What-d'ye-call-'em's

and of the too-well-known intimacy—"Don't you know?"—between Sir Robert and Lady John. He stared at the talkers, the poor little foreigner! and tired even of Fairfax's big fires. The skies that hang so low over the London streets, the rain and muddy ways, or the east wind that parched them into whiteness, made his very soul shrink. That was not at all a successful experiment. He went back on Lady Markham's hands in March, having ensconced himself now in a coat lined with sables, which buried him still more completely than the big chair.

"England is a very fine place," he said, with his teeth chattering, as he came in, out of a boisterous March wind, which carried upon it bushels of that dust that is worth a king's ransom. "It is a very fine place, but—only I don't seem to agree with it." But that summer must certainly come some time—and spring was certainly come at this period, though Gus did not recognise that pleasant season in its English garb—they must all have given in altogether. But when the primroses appeared in the woods Sir Gus began to get back a little of his courage. Fortunately the summer opened brightly, promising to be as warm and genial as the winter had been severe; and by degrees the little gentleman let his fires go down, and left off his furs. Who can doubt that the winter had been very long at Markham for the whole household? They were living alone in their mourning, and Paul, though only in London, was separated from them, and in a state of great uncertainty and doubtful comfort. And other visitors were banished too. But when the spring came back, the household awoke, and broke the bonds of gloom. Even Lady Markham began to smile naturally upon her children—not with the smile of duty put on for their advantage, but with a little natural rising of the clouds. And Alice brightened insensibly, knowing that "they" were to come for Easter; that is, Paul and "one of his friends."

Nothing had been said to Alice upon any subject that was likely to agitate her prematurely, but it was pleasant to look forward to that visit from Paul and his friend—from which fact it may be divined that Lady Markham had been not unfavourably moved by the last item in Fairfax's confession.

Thus summer came again, communicating brightness; and Sir Gus began to live again, and to believe that it might be possible to put up with England after all.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THAT summer was as bright as the winter had been cold. The hot weather came on in May, and the country about Markham brightened into a perfect paradise of foliage and blossom. Sir Gus came to life; he began to show himself in the country, to move about, to accept the invitations which were given to him. And it cannot be denied that his thoughts and plans were much modified after he had made acquaintance with the county and began to feel that people were inclined to pay him a great deal of attention. He had wanted nothing better at first than to be received as a member of Lady Markham's family, to adopt, as it were, his brothers and sisters, and to make them as little conscious as possible of the change he had brought into their life. He had promised that he would never marry, nor do anything to spoil Paul's prospects further. But before the summer was over his views in this respect had sensibly modified. He began to think that perhaps the length and dreariness of the winter had been partly owing to the fact that Lady Markham and her children were less satisfactory than a wife and children of his own. Why should he (after all) sacrifice himself to serve Paul? He was not old, whatever those arrogant young people might think; and probably it was in this way that happiness might come

to him. Paul would no doubt get on very well in society; he would marry well, and his younger son's portion was not contemptible; there really seemed no reason why his elder brother should sacrifice himself on Paul's account. And gradually there dawned upon him an idea that before winter came on again he might have some one belonging to him who should be his very own.

Gus dined out very solemnly by himself, making acquaintance with his neighbours during the Easter recess, and when the great people of the neighbourhood came back to the country after the season; and did not scorn the tables of the less great who remained in the country all the year round. He was not exclusive. The less great houses were still great enough for Gus. He liked to go to the Rectory, where Mr. Stainforth, who was a politic old man, often invited him; and indeed, Sir Augustus, who everybody said was so exceedingly simple and unpretentious, became quite popular in the district where at first everybody had been against him as an intruder. Though it was no less hard upon Paul than before, the new heir was pardoned in the county because of his adoption of the family and his kindness and genuine humility. There could not be any harm in him, people said, when he was so good to the children, when he sought so persistently the friendship of his stepmother, and endeavoured to make everything pleasant for her.

Then it became very evident that Sir Gus, though not so young as he once was, was still marriageable and likely to marry, which naturally still further increased his popularity; and as, instead of attempting any stratagems of self-defence, he was but too eager to put himself into the society of young ladies, and showed unequivocal signs of regarding them with the eye of a purchaser, it was natural that the elder ladies should accept this challenge, and on their parts do what they could to make him acquainted with the

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stores the county possessed. Women do not give themselves to this business of settling marriages in England with the candour and honesty that prevail in other countries. The work is stealthy and unacknowledged, but it is too natural and too just not to be done with more or less vigour; and the county was not less active than other counties. "Poor Paul!" some people said, who had at first received the new baronet as a merely temporary holder of the title and estates—one who, according to a legend dear to the popular mind, had bound himself not to do anything towards the achievement of an heir; but by and by they said "Poor Sir Gus!" and could see no reason in the world why he should sacrifice himself. This was a little after the time when he had himself come to the same conclusion.

When all the families began to return in the end of July, he was asked everywhere. Mourning is not for a man a very rigid bond, and it was now nearly a year since Sir William died, so that there was nothing to restrain him; indeed there were some who said that Lady Markham was too punctilious in keeping Alice at home, never letting her be seen anywhere—a girl who really *ought* to marry, now that the family were in so changed a position. Sir Gus went a great deal to Westland Towers, where there had never been so many parties before—garden parties, archery meetings, competitions at lawn-tennis, to which the entire county was convoked; and at all these parties there was no more favoured guest than Gus. This was a great change, and pleased him much. At "home" he was not much more than put up with. They had come to like him, and they had always been very kind to him; but he had been an intruder, and he had banished the son of the house, and it was not to be supposed that mortal forbearance should go so far as to admire and honour him as the chief person in the household, even though

he was its nominal head. When he went elsewhere Gus was made more of than at Markham, and at the Towers he felt the full force of his own position. His sayings were listened for, his jokes were laughed at, and he himself was followed by judicious flattery. All his little eccentricities were allowed and approved, his light clothes extolled as the most convenient garments in the world, and his distaste for sport and the winter amusements of country life sanctioned and approved.

"How men of refined habits can do it has always been a mystery to me," said Lady Westland.

"You forget, mamma, that a taste for bloodshed is one of the most refined tastes in the world," said Ada, who was herself fond of hunting when she had a chance, and never was better pleased than when she could lunch with a shooting party at the cover-side. Ada made a grimace behind Gus's back, and said "Little monster!" to the other young ladies.

"Ah, poor Paul! We used to see so much of him," she said, "when he was the man, poor fellow, and no one had ever heard of this little Creole. But parents are nothing if not prudent," Miss Westland added; "and now the tropics are in the ascendant, and poor Paul is nowhere. What can one do?" she said with a shrug of her shoulders up to her ears.

Dolly Stainforth, who was of the party, but not old enough or important enough to say anything, grew pale with righteous indignation. She was very well aware that Paul had never "seen much" of the family at Westland Towers: but that they should now pretend to hold him at arm's length stung her to the heart. This took place at a garden party, and the explanation about Paul had been made in the midst of a great many people of the neighbourhood, who had all been very sorry for Paul in their day, yet were all beginning now to turn towards the new-risen sun. Dolly had turned her back upon them, and

gone off by herself in bitterly-suppressed indignation, sore and wounded, though not for her own sake, when she encountered Sir Gus, who had spied her in a turning of the shrubbery. George Westland had spied her too, but had been stopped by his mother on his way to her, and might be seen in the distance standing gloomily on the outskirts of a group of notables, with whom he was supposed to be ingratiating himself, gazing towards the *bosquet* in which the object of his affections had disappeared.

"What is the matter, Miss Dolly?" Sir Gus had said.

"Oh, nothing. I was not crying," Dolly said, with a sob. "I am too indignant to cry. It is the horridness of people," she cried with an outburst of wrath and grief. Sir Gus was distressed. He did not like to see any one cry, much less this dainty little creature, who was almost his first acquaintance in the place.

"Don't," he said, touching her shoulder lightly with his brown hand. "Whatever it is it cannot be worth crying about. None of them can do any harm to you."

"Harm to me! I wish they could," said Dolly; "that would not matter much. But don't believe them, don't you believe them: a little while ago they were all for Paul—nobody was so nice as Paul—and now it is all you, and Paul, they say, is nowhere. Do you think it is like a lady to say that poor Paul is 'nowhere,' only because he has lost his property, and you have got it?" cried Dolly, turning with fury, which it was difficult to restrain, upon the poor little baronet. He changed colour: of course he knew that it was his position, and not any special gifts of his own, which recommended him; yet he did not like the thought.

"That is not my fault, Miss Dolly," he said. "You should not be unjust; though it is your favourite who has been the loser, you ought not to be unjust, for I have nothing more than what is my right."

"Oh, Sir Augustus," said Dolly,

alarmed by her own vehemence, "it was not you I meant. You have always been kind. It was those horrid people who think of nothing but who has the money. And then, you know," she said, turning her tearful eyes upon him, "I have known them all my life—and I can't bear to hear them speak so of Paul."

"And you can't bear me, I suppose, for putting this Paul of yours out of his place?" Gus said.

"No, indeed I don't blame you. A woman might have given it up, but it is not your fault if you are different from a woman—all men are," said Dolly, shaking her head. "When one knows as much about a village as I do, one soon finds out that."

"I suppose you think the women are better than the men," said Sir Gus, shaking his head too.

"I am for my own side," said Dolly promptly, her tears drying up in the impulse of war; "but I did not mean that," she added, "only different. Men and women are not good—or nasty—in the same way. I don't suppose—you—could have done anything but what you did."

"I don't think I could," said Sir Gus, briefly.

"But the people here," said Dolly, "oh, the people here!" She stamped her foot upon the ground in her impatience and indignation; but when he would have pursued the subject, Dolly became prudent, and stopped short. She would say nothing more, except another appeal to heaven and earth against "the horridness of people." This, however, gave Sir Gus a great deal to think of. Dolly did not in the least know what he had in his mind. She was not aware that the little man was going about among all the pretty groups of the garden party in the conscious exercise of choice, noting all the ladies, selecting the one that pleased him. Two or three had pleased him more or less—but one most of all: which was what Dolly Stainforth never suspected. Sir Gus walked about with the air of a man

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occupied with important business. He had no time to pay any attention to the progress of the games that were going on; his own affairs engrossed him altogether. Sometimes he selected one lady from a number on pretence of showing her something, or of watching a game, or hearing the band play a particular air, and carried her off with him to the suggested object, talking much and earnestly. He did not pay much court to the mothers and chaperons, but went boldly to the fountain-head. And some of the pretty young women to whom he talked so gravely did not quite know what to make of the little baronet. They laughed among themselves, and asked each other, "Did he ask you whether you liked town better or country? and if you would not like to take a voyage to the tropics?" Dolly on being asked this question quite early in their acquaintance, had answered frankly, "Not at all," and had further explained that life out of the parish was incomprehensible to her. "I could not leave my poor people for months and months, with nobody but papa to look after them," Dolly had said.

It was only after he had enjoyed about half a dozen interviews of this kind, amusing the greater part of his temporary companions, but fluttering the bosoms of one or two who were quick-witted enough to see the handkerchief trembling in the little sultan's hand, that Sir Gus allowed himself to be carried off in his turn by Ada Westland, who came up to him in her bold way, neglecting all decorum.

"Come with me, Sir Augustus," she said; "I have got a view to show you," and she led him to where, among the trees, there was a glimpse of the beautiful rich country, undulating, all wooded and rich with cornfields, to where Markham Chase, with all its oaks and beeches, shut in the horizon line. There was a glimpse of the house to be had in the distance, peeping from the foliage: and in the centre of the scene, the red roofs of

the village and the slope of the Rectory garden in the sunshine. "I used to be brought here often to have my duty taught me," said Ada. "Mamma made quite a point of it every day when we first came here."

"I am glad your duty makes you look at my house, Miss Westland," said Sir Gus, making her a bow.

"Oh, I don't mean now," said the outspoken young woman. "That is quite a different matter. I was quite young then, you know, and so was Paul, and my mother trained me, up in the way a girl should go. We are new people, you know; we have not much distinction in the way of family. What mamma intended to do with me was to make me marry Paul."

Once more Sir Augustus bowed his head quite gravely. He did not laugh at the bold announcement, as she meant he should. "Was your heart in it?" he said.

"My heart? Do you think I have got one? I don't know—I don't think it was, Sir Augustus. 'Look at all that sweep of country,' mamma used to say; 'that may all be yours if you play your cards well—and a family going back to the Conqueror.' There have only been two generations of us," said Ada; "you may think how grand it would have felt to know that there was a Crusader's monument in the family. In some moods of my mind, especially when I have been very much sat upon by the blue-blooded people, I don't think I should have minded marrying the Crusader himself."

"I can understand the feeling," said Gus. He was perfectly grave, his muscles did not relax a hair's breadth. He stood and looked upon the woods that were his own, and the house which he called home. It looked a little chilly to him, even in the midst of the sunshine. The sky was pale with heat, and all the colours of the country subdued in the brilliant afternoon light, the trees hanging together like terrestrial clouds, the stubble-fields grey where the corn had been

already cut, and the roads white with dust. But it did not occur to him as he stood and gazed at Markham that it would make him happy to live there with his present companion by his side. "Beauty is deceitful, and favour is vain." She was one of the prettiest persons present. She was full of wit and cleverness, and had far more wit and knowledge than half of her party put together. But the heart of the little baronet was not gained by those qualities. He stood quite unmoved by Ada's side. She might have married the Crusader for anything Sir Augustus cared. Ada waited a little to see if no better reply would come, and then she made another *coup*.

"Pity us for an unfortunate family, foiled on every side," she said. "Paul you know, has ceased to be a *parti* altogether. Anybody may marry him who pleases,—and to a district in which men do not about this is a great grievance—but I don't blame you for that, Sir Augustus, though some do. And look there," she said, suddenly turning round, "look at the door of the conservatory. There are mamma's hopes tumbling down in another direction. I don't feel the disappointment so much in my own case, but about George, I do really pity mamma. She can't marry me to the next property, as she intended; and just look at George, making a fool of himself with the parson's daughter. Now, Sir Augustus, don't you feel sorry for mamma?"

"Miss Stainforth is a very charming young lady," said Sir Gus, still as grave as ever, "but I thought that she—" here he stopped in some confusion, having nearly committed himself, he felt.

"I know what you were going to say," said Ada, with a laugh. "You think she had a fancy for Paul too. She might just as well have had a fancy for the moon. The Markhams would never have permitted that; and as for Paul himself, he thought no more of Dolly——! Fancy, Dolly!

but my brother does. It is a pity, a great pity, don't you think, that brothers and sisters can't change places sometimes! George would have made a much better young lady than I do. I am much too outspoken and candid for a girl, but I should never have fallen in love with Dolly Stainforth. If mamma could change us now, it would be some consolation to her still."

"Miss Stainforth is a very charming young lady," Sir Gus said again.

"A—ah!" said Ada, with a malicious laugh, "you admire Dolly too, Sir Augustus? I beg a thousand pardons. I ought to have been more cautious. But I never thought that a man who had seen the world, a man of judgment, a person with experience and discrimination——"

"You think too favourably of me," said Sir Gus. "It is true I have come over a great part of the world; but I don't know that of itself that gives one much experience. You think too favourably of me."

"That is a fault," said Ada, "which most men pardon very easily," and she looked at him in a way that was flattering, Gus felt, but a little alarming too.

This conversation too had its effect upon him. He felt that there was no time to lose in making up his mind. If he was to secure for himself a companion before the winter came on, it would be well not to lose any time. And Miss Westland was very flattering and agreeable; she seemed to have a very high opinion of him. Gus did not feel that she was the woman he would like to marry; but if by any chance it might happen that she was a woman who would like to marry him, he did not feel that she would be very easy to resist. That such a woman might possibly wish to marry him was of itself very flattering; still on the whole, Gus felt that he would prefer to choose rather than to be chosen. And with a shrewd sense of the difficulties of his position, he decided that to have another young lady betrothed

to him would be by far his best safeguard against Ada. A woman who belonged to him would stand up for him; and the mere fact that he belonged to her would be an effectual defence. As it happened, fortune favoured him. Mrs. Booth, who had come with Dolly in her little carriage to the Towers, wanted to get back early, as the evening was so fine, and Dolly declared that there was nothing she would like so much as to walk. There would certainly be somebody going her way to bear her company. Then Sir Gus stepped forward and said he would certainly be going her way, and would walk with her to the Rectory gate. Dolly smiled upon him so gratefully when he said this that his heart stirred in Gus's bosom. She kept near him all the rest of the time, coming up to him now and then to see if he was ready, if he wished to go, with much filial attention; but Gus did not think of it in that light. Nor did he think that it was by way of getting rid of George Westland that she devoted herself to him. This is not an idea which naturally suggests itself to a man who has never had any reason to think badly of himself. Gus had always, on the contrary, entertained a very good opinion of himself; he had known that, on the whole, he deserved that mankind in general should entertain a good opinion of him, and there was nothing at all out of the way, or even unexpected in the fact that Dolly should be pleased by his care of her, and attracted towards himself. It was a thing which was very natural and delightful, and pleased him greatly. When the company began to disperse, he was quite ready to obey Dolly's indication of a wish to go, and to take leave of Lady Westland when her son was out of the way, according to the girl's desire. They set out upon the dusty road together in the grateful cool of the summer evening, carriage after carriage rolling past them, with many nods and wreathed smiles from the occupants, and no doubt many

remarks also upon Dolly's cavalier. But the pair themselves took it very tranquilly. They went slowly along, lingering on the grassy margin of the road to escape the dust, and enjoying the coolness and the quiet.

"How sweet it is," Dolly said, "after the heat of the day."

"You call that hot, Miss Dolly?" said Gus. "We should not call it hot where I come from."

"Well, I am glad I have nothing to do with the tropics," Dolly said. "I like the cool evening better than the day. One can move now—one can walk; but I suppose you never can do anything there in the heat of the day?"

"I am sorry you don't like the tropics," he said. "I think you would, though, if you had ever been there. It is more natural than England. Yes, you laugh, but I know what I mean. I should like to show you the bright-coloured flowers, and the birds, and all the things so full of colour—there's no colour here. I tell Bell and Marie so, and they tell me it is I that can't see. And then the winter—" Gus shuddered as he spoke.

"But you ought to have gone out more," said Dolly, "and taken exercise; that makes the blood run in your veins. Oh, I like the winter! We have not had any skating here for years. It has been so mild. I like a good sharp frost, and no wind, and a real frosty sun, and the ice bearing. You don't know how delightful it is."

"No, indeed," said Gus, with a shudder. "But, perhaps," he added, "if one had a bright little companion like you, one might be tempted to move about more. Bell and Marie are delightful children, but they are a little too young, you know."

"But Alice—" said Dolly, with a little anxiety.

"Alice never has quite forgiven me, I fear; and then she has her mother to think of; and they always tell me she cannot do this or that for her mourning. It is very right to wear mourning,

I don't doubt,' said Gus, "but never to be able to go out, or meet your fellow-creatures——"

"That would be *impossible!*" said Dolly, with decision. "It is not a year yet. You did not know poor Sir William. But next winter it will be different, and we must all try to do our best"—for Lady Markham, she was going to say—but he interrupted her.

"That will be very kind, Miss Dolly. I think you could do a great deal without trying very much. I always feel more cheerful in your company. Do you remember the first time we ever were in each other's company, on the railway?"

"Oh, yes," cried Dolly. She was very incautious. "I thought you were such a——" She did not say queer little man, but felt as if she had said it, so near was it to her lips; and blushed, which pleased Gus greatly, and made him imagine a much more flattering conclusion. "You asked me a great deal about poor Paul," she said, "and then we met them coming home; and Sir William, oh! how ill he looked—as if he would die!"

"You remember that day?" said Gus, much delighted, "and so do I. You told me a great deal about my family. It was strange to talk of my family as if I had been a stranger, and to hear so much about them."

"I thought you were a stranger, Sir Augustus."

"Yes, and you wished I had been one when you found out who I really was. Oh, I don't blame you, Miss Dolly—it was very natural; but I hope now, my dear," he said, with a tone that was quite fatherly, though he did not intend it to be so, "that you are not so sorry, but rather glad on the whole to know Gus Markham, who is not so bad as you thought."

Dolly was surprised to be called "my dear;" but at his age was it not quite natural?

"Oh," she said, faltering, "I never thought you were bad, Sir Augustus; you have always been very kind, I know."

But she could not say she was glad of his existence, which had done so much harm to—other people; even though in her heart she had a liking for Sir Gus, the queerest little man that ever was!

"I have tried to be," he said; "and I think they all feel I have done my best to show myself a real friend; but there comes a time when one wants something more than a friend, and, Dolly, I think that time has come now."

Well! it was a little odd, but she did not at all mind being called Dolly by Sir Gus. She looked at him with a little surprise, doubtful what he could mean. They were by this time quite near the village and the Rectory gate.

"I think," he said, "that if I don't get married, my dear, I shall never be able to stand another winter at Markham. It nearly killed me last year."

"Married!" she cried, her voice going off in a high quaver of surprise and consternation. If her father had intimated a similar intention she could scarcely have been more astonished. This was what everybody had consoled themselves by thinking such a man was never likely to do.

"Yes, married," he said. "Don't you think you know, Dolly, a dear little girl that would marry me, though I am not so young nor so handsome as Paul? You see it is not Paul now, it is me; and though he was handsomer and taller, I don't think he was nearly so good-tempered as I am, my dear. I give very little trouble, and I should always be willing to do what my wife wanted to do—or at least almost always, Dolly—and you would not get that with many other men. Haven't you ever thought of it before? Oh, I have, often. I went through all the others to-day, just to give myself a last chance, to see if, at the last moment, there was any one I liked better; but there was none so nice as you. You see, I have not done it without thought. Now, my pretty Dolly, my little dear, just say you

will marry me before the winter, and to-morrow we can settle all the rest."

He had taken her hand as they stood together at the gate. Dolly's amazement knew no bounds. She was so bewildered that she could only stand and gaze at him with open mouth.

"Do you mean me?" she cried at last—"me?" with mingled horror and surprise. "I don't know what you mean!" she said.

"Yes, my dear, I mean you. I tell you I looked again at all the rest, and there was not one so nice. Of course I mean you, Dolly. I have always been fond of you from the first. I will make you a good husband, dear, and you will make me a sweet little wife."

"Oh, no, no, no!" Dolly cried. The world, and the sky, and the trees, seemed to be going round with her. She caught at the gate to support herself. "No, no, no! It is all a dreadful mistake."

"It cannot be a mistake. I know very well what I am doing, Dolly."

"But oh dear! oh dear! Sir Augustus, let me speak. Do you think I know what I am doing? No, no, no, *no*! You must be going out of your senses to ask me."

"Why? because you are so young and so little! But that is just what I like. You are the prettiest of all the girls. You are a dear, sweet, good little thing that will never disappoint me. No, no, it is no mistake."

To see him standing there beaming and smiling through the dusk was a terrible business for Dolly.

"It *is* a mistake. I cannot, cannot do it—indeed I cannot. I will not marry you—never! I don't want to marry anybody," she said, beginning to weep in her excitement.

Now and then a villager would lumber by, and, seeing the couple at the porch, grin to himself and think that Miss Dolly was just the same as the other lasses. It was a pity the gentleman was so little, was all they said.

CHAPTER XLIV.

At last the year of the mourning was over. The Lennys, the good colonel and his wife, had come to Markham a few days before, and he was a great godsend to the boys, who were vaguely impressed by the anniversary, but could not but feel the grief a little tedious which had lasted a whole year. They were very glad to go out quite early in the morning with the colonel, not at all, as it were, for their own pleasure, but because his visit was to be short, and the keeper was in despair about the birds which no one shot, and which Sir Augustus was so utterly indifferent about.

"He wouldn't mind a bit if the place was given up to the poachers," Harry said. "He says, 'What's the good of the game—can't we buy all we want?' I think he is cracked on that point."

"I don't mind Gus at all in some things," said Roland. "He's not half a bad fellow in some things; but he's an awful muff—no one can deny that."

"He has not been brought up as you have been," the colonel said.

While they stole out in the early morning, the old man and the boys, all keen with anticipated pleasure, Gus felt already the first *frisson* of approaching winter in the sunny haze of September, and had coverings heaped upon him, and dressed by the fire when he got up two hours after. Poor Sir Gus was not at all cheerful. Dolly's refusal had not indeed broken his heart, but it had disappointed him very much, and he did not know what he was to do to make life tolerable now that this expedient had failed. The anniversary oppressed him more or less, not with grief, but with a sense that, after all, the huge change and advancement that had come to him with his father's death had not perhaps brought all he expected it to bring. To be Sir Augustus, and have a fine property and more money than

he knew how to spend, and a grand position, had not increased his happiness. On the contrary, it seemed to him that the first day he had come to Markham, when the children had given him luncheon and showed so much curiosity about him as a relation, had been happier than any he had known since. He too had been full of lively curiosity and expectation, and had believed himself on the verge of a very happy change in his life. But he did not anticipate the death or the trouble to others which were the melancholy gates by which he had to enter upon his higher life. When he had dressed, he sat over the fire thinking of it on that bright September morning. He was half angry because he could not get rid of the feeling of the anniversary. After all, there was nothing more sad in the fifteenth of September than in any other day. But Lady Markham, no doubt, would shut herself up, and Alice look at him as if, somehow or other, he was the cause of it; and they would speak in subdued tones, and it would be a kind of sin to do or say anything amusing. Gus could not but feel a little irritation thinking of the long day before him, and then of the long winter that was coming. And all the prophets said it was to be a hard winter. The holly-trees in the park, where they grew very tall, were already crimson with berries. Already one or two nights' frost had made the geraniums droop. A hard winter! The last had been said to be a mild one. If this was worse than that, Sir Gus did not know what he should do.

The day, however, passed over more easily than he thought. His aunt, Mrs. Lenny, was a godsend to him as the colonel was to the boys. She made him talk of nothing but "the island" all the day long. It was long since she had left it. She wanted to know about everybody, the old negroes, the governor's parties, the regiments that had been there. On her side she had a hundred stories to tell of her own youth, which looked all the

brighter for being so far in the distance. They took a drive together in the middle of the day, basking in the sunshine, and as the evening came on they had a roaring fire, and felt themselves in the tropics.

"Shouldn't you like to go back?" Mrs. Lenny said. "If I were as rich as you, Gus, I'd have my estate there, like in the old days, and there I'd spend my winters. With all the money you've got, what would it matter whether it paid or not? You could afford to keep everything up as in the old days."

"But there's the sea. I would do it in a moment," Gus said, his brown face lighting up, "but for the sea."

"You would soon get used to the sea—it's nothing. You would get over the sickness in a day, and then it's beautiful. Take me with you one time, Gus, there's a darling. I'd like to see it all again before I die."

"I'll think of it," Gus said: and indeed for the next twenty-four hours he thought of nothing else.

Would it be possible? Some people went to Italy for the winter, why not to Barbadoes? No doubt it was a longer voyage; but then what a different life, what a smoothed and warmed existence, without all this English cold and exercise. He thought of it, neither more nor less, all the next night and all the next day.

And no doubt it was a relief to the house in general when the anniversary was over. A vague lightening, no one could tell exactly what, was in the atmosphere. They had spared no honour to the dead, and now it was the turn of the living. To see Bell and Marie in white frocks was an exhilaration to the house. And it cannot be said that any one was surprised when quite quietly, without any warning, Fairfax walked into the hall where the children were all assembled next day. He had paid them various flying visits with Paul during the past year, coming for a day or two at Easter, for a little while in the summer. But there was something differ-

ent, they all thought, about him now. From the moment when Lady Markham had been informed of that one little detail of his circumstances mentioned in a previous chapter, the young man had taken a different aspect in her eyes. He had no longer seemed the careless young fellow of no great account one way or another, very "nice," very simple and humble-minded, the most good-humoured of companions and serviceable of friends, which was how he appeared to all the rest. Mr. Brown had judged justly from the first. The simplicity of the young millionaire had not taken in his experienced faculties. He had always been respectful, obsequious, devoted, long before any one else suspected the truth. How it was, however, that Lady Markham—who was very different from Brown, who considered herself above the vulgar argument of wealth, one to whom the mystic superiority of blood was always discernible, and a rich *roturier* rather less agreeable than a poor one—how it was that she looked upon this easy, careless, lighthearted young man, who was ready to make himself the servant of everybody, and who made his way through life like an obscure and trusted but careless spectator, rather than an agent of any personal importance—with altogether different eyes after the secret of his wealth had been communicated to her, is what we do not pretend to explain. She said to herself that it did not, could not, make any difference; but she knew all the same that it made an immense difference. Had he been poor as well as a nobody, she would have fought with all her powers against all and every persuasion which might have been brought to bear upon her. She would have accorded him her daughter only as it were at the sword's point, if it had been a matter of life and death to Alice. But when she knew of Fairfax's wealth, Lady Markham's opposition gradually and instinctively died away. She said it was the same as ever; but while she said so, felt the

antagonism and the dislike fading out of her mind, why, she did not know. His wealth was something external to himself, made no difference in him; but somehow it made all the difference. Lady Markham from that moment gave up the struggle. She made up her mind to him as her son. She never thought more about his grandfather. Was this worldly-mindedness love of money on her part? It was impossible to think so, and yet what was it? She did not herself understand, and who else could do so?

But nobody else had been aware of this change in the standard by which Fairfax was judged, and everybody had treated him easily, carelessly, as before. Only when he appeared to-day the family generally were conscious of a difference. He was more serious, even anxious; he had not an ear for every piece of nonsense as before, but was grave and pre-occupied, not hearing what was said to him. Mrs. Lenny thought she knew exactly what was the matter. He attracted her special sympathies.

"Poor young fellow," she said, "he's come courting, and he might just as well court the fairies at the bottom of the sea. My Lady Markham's not the woman I take her for if she'll ever give her pretty daughter to the likes of him."

"He wants to marry Alice, do you think?" said Gus. "I wonder if *she'll* have nothing to say to him either?"

He was thinking of Dolly, but Mrs. Lenny understood that it was of Lady Markham's opposition he thought.

"I would not answer for the girl herself," Mrs. Lenny said; "but Gus, my dear, you have done harm enough in this house; here's a case in which you might be of use. You have neither chick nor child. Why shouldn't you settle something on your pretty young sister, and let her marry the man she likes?"

"No, I have neither chick nor child," Gus said.

It was not a speech that pleased him, and yet it was very true. He pondered this question with a continually increasing depression in his mind all day. He could not get what he wanted himself, but he might help Fairfax to get it, and make up to him for the imperfections of fortune. Perhaps he might even be asked, for anything he could tell, to serve Paul in the same way. This made the little baronet sad, and even a little irritated. Was this all he had been made a great man for, an English landed proprietor, in order that he should use his money to get happiness for other people, none for himself?

In the meantime Fairfax had followed Alice to the west room, her mother's favourite place, but Lady Markham was not there.

"I will tell mamma. I am sure she will be glad to see you," Alice said.

"Just one moment—only wait one moment," Fairfax said, detaining her with his hand raised in appeal.

But when she stopped at his entreaty he did not say anything. What answer could she make him? She was standing waiting with a little wonder and much embarrassment. And he said nothing; at last—

"Paul is very well," he said.

"I am very glad. We heard from him yesterday."

Then there was another pause.

"Miss Markham," said Fairfax, "I told your mother myself of *that*, you know, and a great deal more. She was not so—angry as I feared."

"Angry!" Alice laughed a little, but very nervously. "How could she be angry? It was not anything that could—"

What had she been going to say? Something cruel, something that she did not mean.

"Nothing that could—matter to you? I was afraid not," said Fairfax; "that is what I have been fearing you would say."

"Of course it does not matter to us," said Alice, "how should it?

Why should it matter to any one? We are not such poor creatures, Mr. Fairfax. You think you—like us; but you have a very low opinion of us after all."

"No, I don't think I like you. I think something very different. You know what I think," he said. "It all depends upon what you will say. I have waited till yesterday was over and would not say a word; but now the world has begun again. How is it to begin for me? It has not been good for very much in the past; but there might be new heavens and a new earth if—Alice!" he cried, coming close to her, his face full of emotion, his hands held out.

"Mr. Fairfax!" she said, drawing back a step. "There is mamma to think of. I cannot go against her. I must do what she says."

"Just one word, whatever comes of it, to myself—from you to me—from you to me! And after," he said, breathless, "she shall decide."

Alice did not say any word. Perhaps she had not time for it—perhaps it was not needed. But just then the curtains that half veiled the west room were drawn aside with a fretful motion.

"If it is you who are there, Alice and Fairfax," said Sir Gus—and in his voice, too, there was a fretful tone, "I just want to say one word. I'll make it all right for you. You need not be afraid of mamma. I'll make it all right with her. There! that was all I wanted to say."

When Sir Gus had delivered himself of this little speech he went off again very hastily to the hall, not meaning to disturb any tender scene. The idea had struck him all at once, and he carried it out without giving himself time to think. It did him a little good; but yet he was cross, not like himself, Bell and Marie thought. There was a fire in the hall, too, which the children, coming in hot and flushed from their games, had found great fault with.

"You will roast us all up; you will

make us thin and brown like yourself," said Bell, who was always saucy.

"Am I so thin and so brown?" the poor little gentleman had said. "Yes, I suppose so, not like you, white and red."

"Oh, Bell, how could you talk so, to hurt his feelings?" said little Marie, as they stood by the open door and watched him, standing sunning himself in the warmth.

His brown face looked very discontented, sad, yet soft, with some feeling that was not anger. The little girls began to draw near. For one thing the autumn air was cool in the afternoon, and their white frocks were not so thick as their black ones. They began to see a little reason in the fire. Then Bell, always the foremost, sprang suddenly forward, and clasped his arm in both hers.

"He is quite right to have a fire," she said. "And I hate you for being cross about it, Marie. He is the kindest old brother that ever was. I don't mind being roasted, or anything else Gus pleases."

"Oh, Gus, you know it wasn't me!" cried Marie, clinging to the other arm.

His face softened as he looked from one to another.

"It wasn't either of you," he said. "I was cross, too. It is the cold—it is the winter that is coming. One can't help it."

It was not winter that was coming, but still there was a chill little breeze playing about, and the afternoon was beginning to cloud over. Lady Markham coming down stairs was struck by the group in the full light of the fire, which threw a ruddy gleam into the clouded daylight. Something touched her in it. She paused and stood beside them, looking at him kindly.

"You must not let them bother you. You are too kind to them," she said.

Just then the post-bag came in, and Mrs. Lenny along with it, eager, as

people who never have any letters to speak of always are, about the post. They all gathered about while the bag was opened and the letters distributed. All that Mrs. Lenny got was a newspaper—a queer little tropical broadsheet, which was of more importance, as it turned out, than all the letters which the others were reading. She put herself by the side of the fire to look over it, while Lady Markham in the window opened her correspondence, and Gus took the stamps off a foreign letter he had received to give them to Bell and Marie. The little girls were in all the fervour of stamp-collecting. They had a book full of the choicest specimens, and this was just the kind of taste in which Sir Gus could sympathise. He was dividing the stamps between them equally, bending his little brown head to the level of Marie, for Bell was now quite as tall as her brother. Their little chatter was restrained, for the sake of mamma and Colonel Lenny, who were both reading letters, into a soft hum of accompaniment, which somehow harmonised with the ruddy glow of the fire behind them, warming the dull air of the afternoon.

"That will make the German ones complete," Bell was saying. And, "Oh, if I had only a Greek, like Bell, I should be happy!" cried Marie. The little rustle of the newspaper in Mrs. Lenny's hand was almost as loud as their subdued voices. All at once, into the midst of this quiet, there came a cry, a laughing, a weeping, and Mrs. Lenny, jumping up, throwing down the chair she had been sitting on, rushed at Sir Gus, thrusting the paper before him, and grasping his arm with all her force.

"Oh, Gus, Gus, Gus!" she cried, "Oh, Colonel, look here! Gavestonville estate's in the market. The old house is going to be sold again. Oh, Colonel, why haven't we got any money to buy it, you and me!"

"Give it here," said Sir Gus.

He held it over Marie's head, who stood shadowed by it as under a tent,

gazing up at him and holding her stamp in her hand. The little gentleman did not say another word. He paid no attention either to Mrs. Lenny's half hysterics or the calls of little Marie, who had a great deal to say to him about her stamp. His face grew pale with excitement under the brown. He walked straight away from them, up the staircase and to his own room; while even Lady Markham, roused from her letters, stood looking after him and listening to the footstep ringing very clear and steady, but with a sound of agitation in it, step by step up the stairs and along the corridor above. It seemed to them all, young and old, as if something had happened, but what they could not tell.

Sir Gus was very grave at dinner: he did not talk much—and though he was more than usually kind, yet he had not much to say, even to the children, after. But by this time the interest had shifted in those changeable young heads to Fairfax, who was the last novelty, “engaged to” Alice, a piece of news which made Bell and Marie tremulous with excitement, and excited an instinctive opposition in Roland and Harry. But when the evening was over Gus requested an interview with Lady Markham, and conducted her with great solemnity to the library, though it was a room he did not love. There he placed himself in front of the fire, contemplating her with a countenance quite unlike his usual calm.

“I have something very important to tell you,” he said. “I have taken a resolution, Lady Markham.” And in every line of the little baronet's figure it might be seen how determined this resolution was.

“Tell me what it is,” Lady Markham said, as he seemed to want her to say something. And then Sir Gus cleared his throat as if he were about to deliver a speech.

“It is—but first let me tell you that I promised to make it all right for those young people, Alice and

Fairfax. I hope you'll let them be happy. It seems to be that to be happy when you are young, when you can have it is the best thing. I promised to make it all right with you. I'll settle upon her whatever you think necessary.”

“You have a heart of gold,” said Lady Markham, much moved, “and they will be as grateful to you as if they wanted it. Mr. Fairfax,” she said (and Lady Markham, though she was not mercenary, could not help saying it with a little pride), “Mr. Fairfax is very rich. He has a great fortune; he can give Alice everything that could be desired—though all the same, dear Gus, they will be grateful to you.”

“Ah!” said Sir Gus, with a blank air of surprise like a man suddenly stopped by a blank wall. He made a dead stop and looked at her, then resumed. “I have taken a resolution, Lady Markham. I think I never ought to have come here; at all events it has not done me very much good, has it, nor any one else? And I daren't face another winter. I think I should die. Perhaps if I had married and that sort of thing it might have been better. It is too late to think of that now.”

“Why too late?” said Lady Markham. Her heart had begun to beat loudly; but she would not be outdone in generosity, and indeed nothing had been more kind than poor Gus. She determined to fight his battle against himself. “Why too late? You must not think so. You will not find the second winter so hard as the first—and as for marrying—”

“Yes, that's out of the question, Lady Markham; and at first I never meant to, because of Paul. So here is what I am going to do. You heard what old Aunt Katie said. The old house is for sale again; the old place where she was born and I was born, my uncle's old place that he had to sell, where I am as well known as Paul is at Markham. I am going back there; don't say a word. It's better for me, and

better for you, and all of us. I'll take the old woman with me, and I'll be as happy as the day is long."

Here Gus gave a little gulp. Lady Markham got up and went towards him with her hand extended in anxious deprecation, though who can tell what a storm was going on in her bosom, of mingled reluctance and expectation—an agitation beyond words. He too raised his hand to keep her silent.

"Don't say anything," he said; "I've made up my mind; it will be a great deal better. Paul can come back, and I dare say he'll marry little Dolly. You can say I hope he will, and make her a good husband. And since Fairfax is rich why that is all right without me. Send for Paul, my lady, and we'll settle about the money; for I must have money you know. I must have my share. And I'd like to give a sort of legacy to the little girls. They're fond of me, really, those two children, they are now, though you might not think it."

"We are all fond of you," said Lady Markham, with tears.

"Well, perhaps that is too much to expect; but you have all been very kind. Send for Paul, and make him bring the lawyer, and we'll get it all settled. I shall go out by the next steamer," said Sir Gus, after a little pause, recovering his usual tone. "No more of this cold for me. I shall be king at Gavestonville, as Paul will be here. I don't think, Lady Markham, I have anything more to say."

"But," she cried, clinging to her duty, "*But*—I don't know what to say to you. Gus—Gus!"

"I have made up my mind," said the little gentleman with great dignity, and after that there was not another word to say.

But there was a great convulsion in Markham when Sir Gus went away. The children were inconsolable. And Dolly stood by the Rectory gate when his carriage went past to the railway with the tears running down her cheeks. He had the carriage stopped at that last moment, and stepped out to speak to her, letting his fur cloak fall on the road.

"Marry Paul, my dear," he said, "that will be a great deal better than if you had married me. But you may give me a kiss before I go away."

There was a vague notion in Sir Gus's mind that little Dolly had wanted to marry him, but that he had discouraged the idea. He spoke in something of the same voice to the children as they saw him go away watched him driving off. "I can't take you with me," he said, "but you shall come and see me." And so, with great dignity and satisfaction, Sir Gus went away.

Thus Paul Markham had his property again when he had given up all thought of it; but the little gentleman who is the greatest man in Barbadoes has not the slightest intention of dying to oblige him, and in all likelihood the master of Markham will never be Sir Paul.

THE MYSTERY OF THE PEZAZI—A SKETCH FROM CEYLON.

I AM no believer in the supernatural, and in the face of the apparently inexplicable circumstances which I am about to relate, am persuaded that they could be accounted for in some way, though whether scientifically or by what other means I must confess myself at a loss to determine.

I had certainly never expected to meet with anything approaching a ghost or a "mystery" in Ceylon. One generally associates the supernatural with ancient habitations—ancestral mansions, deserted chambers in baronial halls—peculiar to the "old country" or the Continent. The cold dark nights of the Christmas season, or the waning twilight of a Midsummer's eve are more suggestive of ghostly appearances and weird sounds than the blazing sun of the tropics, and the warmth and verdure which lend a cheerful brightness to life in the East.

But I suppose all countries and climes are alike liable to be surrounded with that indefinable air of mystery which seems to have had its existence from time immemorial, and its ascendancy to a greater or less extent over all natures. Few places but have their legends and stories attached to them, and Ceylon is no exception to the rule; indeed, the natives are imbued to a more than ordinary degree with superstitious feelings, but if I were to go into a dissertation upon their strange customs and fancies I might fill pages, for which, with the present matter in hand, I have neither time nor space.

In the following account I wish to state that every circumstance related is strictly true, and I invite the attention of those who may be able to render a possible explanation of facts for the personal experience of

which I can vouch, and for a solution of which I have repeatedly sought, but to the present time without avail. The occurrences to which I allude took place on the night of the 28th of August, 1876. It may be as well to state briefly, first of all, a few preliminaries which bear upon the matter.

We were residing on one of my husband's estates in the outlying district of Ouvah, some thirty miles distant from the little up-country town of Badulla, destined, however, at some future day to become no unimportant centre in connection with railway extension. On an adjoining property we had long contemplated erecting a bungalow more suited to our requirements than was the little abode we then occupied, which was very small and homely. In the beginning of 1876 we designed the plan, and made arrangements for the commencement of the building. But a drawback existed to the speedy completion of the work, in the fact that the indolence of the native is so great that, without constant supervision he is not to be depended upon, and my husband soon found that his masons and carpenters were no exception to the general rule, and that his occasional visits did little to expedite the progress of the bungalow.

After some persuasion I was induced to leave "Mausa-Kellie," and remove into the new bungalow on "Allagalla" estate, in order that we might be on the spot, and so hasten its completion. Had I not felt tolerably secure in the prospect of an uninterrupted continuance of fine weather, I should have quitted my quarters at "Mausa-Kellie" more reluctantly than I did, for they were at least comfortable; and in going to our new resi-

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dence we had to be fully prepared for "roughing" things in a way I, at least, had never done before. But the season was advancing, hotter and drier each day, and on the Ouvah side of the hill district the weather is much more to be depended on than in the parts adjoining Kandy. On the latter side both the south-west and north-east monsoons are felt, and nine months of the year are more or less rainy. In Ouvah, the south-west or little monsoon is not so perceptible; a thunderstorm or two, or a few heavy showers just about that time of year, may serve to remind one of the season; otherwise the weather is fine and dry, almost without intermission, from January to September.

The physical characteristics of this locality are somewhat peculiar. Although the estates adjoined, and the bungalows were not more than a mile or so from each other, the distance to be traversed by the bridle-path which led round the base of the hills, a range of some extent, was at least four miles. On foot, by a stiff climb, the ascent from "Mausa-Kellie" and the descent into "Allagalla" could be accomplished, the estates being situated on opposite sides of the hill. As this route was scarcely practicable for a lady, and I had no desire to expose myself unnecessarily to the fatigue of a ride in the hot sun, I had not previously visited the site of our new building, and certainly felt somewhat staggered at the appearance things presented on my arrival there.

I had sent over a sufficiency of furniture and household necessities for our requirements, and E— had spent the day in making the best arrangements he could for our comfort, but the scene of bustle and confusion which met my eyes when, turning a sharp angle of the road, I came suddenly in full view of the bungalow, exceeded all my anticipations. The estate was one of the steepest in the district; indeed no suitable site for a bungalow could be

found without considerable excavation, and this gave it the appearance of being built upon a ledge of rock, the sides descending almost perpendicularly to some depth. From its peculiar situation we might not inappropriately have designated it the "Eagle's Nest." That part of the estate on which the bungalow was built being a new clearing, and some of it only just burnt off, the immediate surroundings were not very attractive; but the adjacent ground—young and old coffee on the lower parts, patina on the summits of the hills, dense jungle crowning some of the ranges, tufts of scrub and forest dotted here and there on others, and the gradual slope of the valleys between each range towards the wide expanse of low country a few miles further below—combined to form a prospect as magnificent as any I had ever beheld.

Just below the bungalow I came to a standstill; the road suddenly terminated, and an almost perpendicular bank stood up before me. "Cock Robin," however, was better acquainted with the spot than I was, and doubtless divining my hesitation, took his own way, went straight at it, and, floundering up, landed me safely on the levelled compound above, amidst a confused litter of bricks, sawn timber, heaps of lime, pools of mortar, stones, tools, masons, carpenters, and coolies, a conglomeration of various implements and races, Malays, Tamils, and Singhalese of every stamp and caste being congregated together in almost equal numbers.

From behind this motley assemblage a heavily-bearded visage was soon distinguishable, and a familiar figure emerged, its burliness scarcely diminished by a suit of white jungle clothes, and the light of amusement inclined to beam out of the dark, kindly eyes, as they rested on mine, and descried the consternation and disgust which must have been very vividly pictured in them. When, at length, after dismounting, I managed with my husband's

assistance to surmount the various obstacles in our way and reach the bungalow, I was even more dismayed, for although he had prepared me for finding things in an incomplete and disordered condition, my imagination had scarcely realised the veritable chaos which the scene before me presented.

The building was, or rather promised to be, a fine large bungalow, containing several lofty rooms, a spacious smoking hall, and broad verandahs. But the plan was only just marked out by stone pillars and partially built walls—even the roof was not shingled all over, and through the open rafters here and there the sun blazed fiercely in. The only room which was really in a habitable state was the office, and that could just boast of four walls which were already dry and whitewashed; but even here the doors were not put up, and pieces of coir-matting, hung before the apertures, were improvised as curtains in their place. The room was, however, sufficiently large to admit of our using it as a sleeping apartment; we migrated into the various rooms by turns with our dressing paraphernalia, and the few articles of dining-room furniture indispensable to our needs were placed day by day wherever we found it most convenient to sit down to our meals. How I resigned myself during so long a period to the many drawbacks to comfort I then experienced I find it difficult in the retrospect to conceive. But whenever I felt a disposition to grumble I had only to look from the front verandah to dispel every feeling of impatience and discontent. The magnificent panorama before my eyes almost surpassed description.

"Allagalla" being situated at the very extremity of the district, the termination of the various ranges of hills around afforded us the view of a wide expanse of low country, extending to the right and left as well as before us.

Directly opposite, stretching away

for miles towards the beautiful port of Trincomalee, it lay wrapped in an unbroken stillness. Some idea of the remarkable purity of the atmosphere may be formed from the circumstance that on a clear day the sea-line can be distinctly traced on the horizon at a distance of more than seventy miles, looking like a silver thread—the white foam of the advancing and receding waves even perceptible at times to the naked eye. To the left lay the watery plains of Aloom Newara—the Bintenne fields, where the snipe flock in numbers as the season approaches, affording good shooting for all lovers of sport. Beyond, dimly fading in the distance, the broken peaks and summits of the Kandyan ranges reared their lofty heights—Mchadahamahanewara, the Knuckles and Hewahette, and even portions of the Nitre Cave and Kalibooka districts being visible sometimes. Immediately below we could trace at intervals portions of the white line of high road passing to the right through the paddy fields of Beebola, and onward through the park country, by many deviations from the straight line to Batticaloa, one of the hottest ports in the island.

I found "Allagalla" a most lonely abode; it was so far from any other estate, or rather bungalow (for estates adjoined it in more than one point), that we rarely saw visitors, especially as we were in such confusion with the building operations that we could not entertain. E—being secretary to the Medical Aid Committee at that time, and a member of the Planters' Association, had many public meetings to attend in the district; and the visiting of his own properties, both in the immediate neighbourhood and in other districts, made his absences very frequent. But I was thoroughly accustomed to jungle life, and, except on his trips to any great distance, rarely cared to accompany him, the long rides in the hot sun being so trying to me. I had plenty of resources for occupation and amusement in my work and writing, drawing and

books, though I often longed for my piano, which of course had been left with our other goods at "Mausa-Kellie;" my poultry-yard and flower-garden too were still in prospective at "Allagalla," and I missed them considerably. But, on the whole, night was the only time when I really did feel the loneliness and solitude almost more than oppressive. Even when my husband was at home the weird aspect of the surroundings had always an unpleasant effect on my nerves, and it was sometimes with an unaccountable sort of shiver that I rose from my comfortable rattan reclining chair in the verandah to retire for the night, when he had fallen asleep in the opposite long arm-chair.

To stand on the levelled space in front of the bungalow on a bright moonlight night, and gaze around, gave me a shuddering sensation of something "uncanny" about the place. The black, overhanging rocks above—the "devil's rocks" as they were called—looked blacker in the shades of night; the charred trunks of felled trees in the clearing stood out in huge shapeless bodies here and there, the few remaining branches on them projecting like phantom hands and glinting in the fitful moonlight; the chasms—and there were many—had the appearance of unfathomable depths; and the sharp outline of the rugged hills against the sky made them resemble impending masses in close proximity, ready to close upon and overwhelm everything within their range beneath their stupendous weight.

Before we took up our residence on "Allagalla" there had been floating rumours amongst the natives that a "Pezazi," a "Yakkho"—or in plain English, a *devil*—haunted its vicinity, rumours which of course E—regarded with supreme contempt, ridiculing all the stories which came to his ears.

Still, the apprehension exhibited by the natives was genuine enough, and we had more than one instance in

which fear so completely overcame them that they succumbed to its effects. One case, which fell immediately under my notice, was that of a Singhalese lad about seventeen years of age, employed as a servant by the conductor, who became, as the Tamils graphically describe it, "Pezazi poodichidi, or "devil-taken"—as we should express it, "possessed of the devil,"—and gave himself up for lost. He had for some days refused to work, and hung about the compound in a state of abject terror, which increased on the approach of night. Soon he betook himself to one of the go-downs belonging to the bungalow, where he lay in a state of partial coma, trembling and quaking in every limb, and refusing all offers of food or medicine. Unfortunately, at that time, the appointment of a medical officer to the district had not been concluded, so that no professional help was at hand. Persuasion failing, threats and even force were resorted to, but without effect; nothing would rouse him, and all that could be gathered from his miserable articulations was a kind of incoherent entreaty to be left to his fate; it was useless to make any effort to rescue him from the grasp of the fiend who held him as his victim. On the morning of the third day the unfortunate creature was dead, and laid in his grave before the sun went down.

This circumstance impressed me very unpleasantly, and although I scouted the idea of there being anything to justify such apprehensions as led to the death of the wretched boy, I could not but wish that these notions were less prevalent amongst the natives, as it became quite disagreeable having the servants and coolies in a state of continual trepidation, and circulating the most improbable stories amongst themselves and their neighbours.

I observed, however, that those natives who professed Christianity, both Romanists and Protestants, exhibited no symptoms of fear, neither were they so credulous as the Buddhists.

The Tamil coolies appeared more superstitious than any, impressing upon one the generally received opinion, which has almost become an axiom, that the greater the ignorance, the greater is the superstition.

The memorable night on which the circumstances I am about to describe took place, E—— and I had retired early, as was our usual custom. The servants slept in go-downs outside, built in the compound at the back of the bungalow, and it so happened at the time that the conductor and his family also occupied a go-down, the small bungalow in which he had formerly lived having been recently destroyed by fire.

E—— was never a sound sleeper, and the least noise soon roused him. I, on the contrary, enjoyed my repose, and even when dawn of day urged the necessity of rising if we would have a refreshing half hour before the sun burst forth in its tropical heat and dried up all the dews of night, would fain have lingered in the transition state between slumber and wakefulness, when, knowing that we are in dreamland, we still wish to prolong the duration of that blissful feeling of semi-unconsciousness, and avert for a while the awakening to the stern realities and common-places of everyday life.

Thus, wrapped in dreams, I lay on the night in question, tranquilly sleeping, but gradually roused to a perception that discordant sounds disturbed the serenity of my slumber. Loth to stir, I still dozed on, the sounds, however, becoming, as it seemed, more determined to make themselves heard; and I awoke to the consciousness that they proceeded from a belt of adjacent jungle, and resembled the noise that would be produced by some person felling timber.

Shutting my ears to the disturbance, I made no sign, until, with an expression of impatience E—— suddenly started up, when I laid a detaining grasp upon his arm, murmuring that there was no need to think of

rising at present—it must be quite early, and the kitchen cooly was doubtless cutting fire-wood in good time. E—— responded in a tone of slight contempt that no one could be cutting fire-wood at that hour, and the sounds were more suggestive of felling jungle; and he then inquired how long I had been listening to them. Now thoroughly aroused, I replied that I had heard the sounds for some time, at first confusing them with my dreams, but soon sufficiently awakening to the fact that they were no mere phantoms of my imagination, but a reality. During our conversation the noises became more distinct and loud; blow after blow resounded, as of the axe descending upon the tree, followed by the crash of the falling timber. Renewed blows announced the repetition of the operations on another tree, and continued till several were devastated. Exclaiming wrathfully that he would “stand this sort of thing no longer” E—— pushed aside the matting overhanging the doorway, and passing through a couple of rooms and a passage, stood in the back verandah and shouted for the apoo and the conductor. I remained within, listening in mute astonishment to what was passing. It appeared that both conductor and servants were all awake, and I could hear the wailing of a child, followed by the sound of a woman’s frightened weeping from one of the go-downs outside. E—— was the first to speak. In imperious tones he demanded what the conductor meant by allowing such a disturbance at that hour—why did he not put an immediate stop to it? The conductor’s reply was given without hesitation, deferentially enough, but with no attempt at evading the question. His English was not elegant, but at least explicit. “I should be very glad to stop it, sir, if I could, but I can’t. It’s no one at work, sir—it’s the devil.”

I confess that my nerves were not proof against this startling announcement. I sought companionship.

Throwing on my dressing-gown I quickly proceeded to the verandah, looking at the clock on the sideboard *en passant*. The hands pointed to 2.55 A.M. Sufficiently convinced that there was something very extraordinary going on, I joined E—— in the verandah. The conductor, head appoo, and several of the other servants were standing outside in the compound. All this time there had been no cessation of the sounds. The regular blow of the axe and the crash of the falling tree went on without intermission. For the moment, as the conductor ceased speaking, E——'s utter astonishment almost took away his breath. This was succeeded, as he has since admitted, by a cold chill, which crept imperceptibly over him as he stood there, and seemed to paralyse his powers of articulation. Hastily rallying himself, with rising anger, he found utterance.

"Conductor, do you take me for a fool, or am I to consider you one, to believe in such humbug as this? I looked upon you as a man of some sense, but you appear to be as foolish as the coolies. You know as well as I do that the devil doesn't play practical jokes like these, and that no such person as the devil is allowed to go about as these ignorant people describe—that it is simply a tissue of humbugging superstition."

The conductor shook his head. "He was very sorry to lose master's good opinion, he had no wish to believe in the devil, he did not believe in the devil, at the same time he could not account for the sounds. No person would dare to be in the jungle at this hour, in such darkness, therefore no human being could make them" *ergo* the devil must!

Logic certainly, but not convincing enough for E——. Exasperated beyond control, he called for his gun, and shouting in Tamil that he was going to fire, discharged both barrels in the direction whence the sounds proceeded—the strip of jungle almost adjoining the compound, so close was

its proximity to the bungalow. The sounds became fainter; suddenly stopped. Congratulating himself upon having "settled" the devil, for the present at any rate, E—— re-loaded his gun, and sending the servants to their rooms, we returned to our own, to compose ourselves to slumber again if possible; but I am fain to confess that my apprehensions were quickened and my nerves by this time quite unstrung. Anything tangible one might grapple with and surmount, but this mysterious intruder baffled and filled one with undefinable dread—of what, it was impossible to conjecture.

Some time elapsed, it may have been a quarter of an hour, and my quakings having somewhat subsided, I was dropping off into a restless doze, when suddenly a whole battery of blows resounded in the immediate vicinity, succeeded by thundering crashes in quick succession. Then came a violent rush of wind, followed by a volley of what seemed to be missiles, in the shape of stones, sand, and other loose materials hurled down upon the roof of the outside buildings with the noise of a hurricane.

The sudden alarm almost deprived me of my self-possession, and E—— could scarcely repress his indignation, so firmly did the conviction rest in his mind that human agency was at work. His muttered imprecations were not a few, and I pitied the poor "devil," whoever he might be, who might at that moment have fallen under the lash of his vengeful feelings.

After this we heard no more, the fiend having apparently exhausted his displeasure. Daylight came at last, and with it my nerves recovered their wonted equilibrium.

Directly after the matutinal cup of coffee, E—— went out, traversed every part of the small belt of jungle adjacent, and came back thoroughly disappointed and nonplussed with the result of his investigations. Not a trace of a tree having been touched was perceptible, nor was there a vestige of any substance whatever on

the roof of the buildings in the compound.

No satisfactory solution of the mysterious noises we heard has ever been offered, and we can arrive at no conclusion. It has been suggested that they may have been produced by an echo. The strip of jungle ascended the hill, on the other side of which was a deep valley. On the opposite side of this valley rose another range of hills, covered with a tract of heavy jungle. This was valuable, as the district did not abound in very extensive forest, and timber was in request. It is possible that the sound of felling in this jungle might be echoed by the opposite hill, but even then, other circumstances combined to stultify this supposition; the echo would be heard on the hill where the sounds were made, not on that which produced it. No felling was going on there at that time, and had any one attempted to fell and carry off timber by stealth, the act must have been detected. Throughout the entire jungle did E— subsequently extend his investigations without discovering a sign of human being having been engaged in any such operation. And then, who would, who could, go into the depths of a Ceylon jungle at dead of night without even a streak of moonlight to direct their steps, for any purpose whatsoever? Most natives are timorous of even walking on the high road in darkness. Lights would have been of little use, and moreover would have been likely to lead to the discovery of their whereabouts. But the main fact remained to overthrow all the possible explanations we could devise—no felling had taken place in any part of the jungle.

This fact goes far also to disprove any supposition which might be urged on the ground of volcanic agency, which would leave some traces of its action. Neither is Ceylon subject to earthquakes or disturbances resulting from this cause, though it is not altogether exempt from them, as, in the autumn of 1874, I myself experienced

a shock one night which we found was attributable to a slight earthquake which was felt more or less in different parts of the island.

Time passed on. I was not so brave as formerly about being left alone at night, and that day week E— had occasion to attend a medical committee meeting at Cooroovagalan, and could not return home till the following morning. I might have accompanied him had I felt equal to the ride, but my nerves were in so shaken a state that I could not sit my horse, and had to give up the attempt and remain at home. As night advanced, my fears redoubled. Dinner over, I kept the servants about the bungalow as long as I could, but at length they had finished all I could find for them to do, and, not wishing to display any feelings of nervousness, I was obliged to dismiss them. I could, however, hear them in conversation outside over their rice, and summoned up courage to retire for the night. Just before "turning in" an impulse led me to push aside the curtain over the doorway, and gaze upon the solitude around. The tall pillars and bare scaffolding, half-built walls and dark corners looked weird and desolate enough; and with a feeling of insecurity I dropped the curtain and extinguished my lamp. The convivial domestic outside had by this time ceased their chattering; all was still, when upon my startled ears fell the unwelcome but familiar sound of a heavy blow—an axe falling upon a tree! Horrified and unnerved, and dreading that the events of the previous week were about to be re-enacted, to what extent I could form no limit or conception, I hastily sought my pillow, bathed in a cold perspiration. Whether imagination or not this time I cannot determine, but if it was the "pezazi" again, bent upon terrifying us poor human beings, he desisted for that night, and relinquished his intention; for no more of the dreaded sounds did I hear; nor have I, from that day to this, ever been troubled with anything

intangible to cause alarm or raise suspicions of a superstitious nature in my mind.

As might have been expected, after this occurrence all sorts of reports and vague stories were brought to our ears, such as that of a mason who, sleeping in an open shed in company with several other workmen, deposed to having actually seen the "pezazi" in *propria persona*, and went so far as to give a vivid description of his chain, horns, and cloven foot in regular order!

Another man, a Jaffna Tamil, had occasion to sleep in a small store standing alone on the patina some few hundred yards from any other dwelling, and he calmly asserted with great seriousness that nightly did the Evil One pace the narrow verandah in front of his room, clanking his chain, and from time to time knocking for admittance. Samuel, who professed Christianity, stated that on the arrival of

this unwelcome visitant from the unknown world, he read aloud his Testament by the light of his solitary lamp, and after repeated unsuccessful demands to enter, the uninvited guest was forced to take his departure, unable to endure the reading of Holy Writ.

All these stories we took for what they were worth; and gradually the natives became less importunate, and, as time went on, the rumours died a natural death.

But the fact remains, and will be for ever impressed upon my memory, that the felling of the jungle at dead of night was no conjured-up fancy of a disordered imagination; though to what cause the sounds were attributable must, I fear, remain an inexplicable mystery, or be put down, as by the natives, to the evil machinations of a veritable "Pezazi."

A. EDWARDS.

NOTE.

IN an article written by Mr. Harry Quilter in *Macmillan's Magazine* for September, named *The New Renaissance*, I find two sentences relating to myself. The first is this: "The temptation of course was very great for Mr. W. M. Rossetti to write complimentary criticisms of Mr. Swinburne." The second sentence is this: "We know that . . . one Rossetti wrote poems and painted pictures, and the other wrote criticisms on them, and so influenced both arts."

Some sort of imputation upon me appears to be intended in these sentences, taken in their general context.

I should like to learn from Mr. Quilter what is the reason why (in his opinion) the temptation was very great for me to write complimentary criticisms of Mr. Swinburne, and why this should be "of course." Also whether his second sentence means (as, according to grammatical rules, it naturally would mean) that I wrote criticisms on the poems and pictures of my brother Dante Rossetti, and if so, what is the evidence which he adduces in proof of this. If he merely means that I wrote criticisms on poems and pictures (other than those of my brother), I must be excused for expressing a wish that the laxity of his diction had been exercised upon some topic not involving my character for critical probity.

WM. M. ROSSETTI.

To the EDITOR of "MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE."

DEAR SIR,—I regret that Mr. W. M. Rossetti's sensitiveness to criticism should compel me to enter in your pages upon a subject which can hardly be of the slightest interest to any one but Mr. Rossetti himself. Nevertheless, as he has challenged me to explain and justify certain assertions, I reluctantly proceed to do both as briefly as possible. As to the first matter mentioned in Mr. Rossetti's letter—if personal friendship, identity of artistic creed, and fellowship in literary work, do not constitute a "great temptation" to favourable criticism, then men are much stronger, and surrounding influences much weaker, than I have previously supposed. The "of course, &c." referred to, merely meant that the friendship and sympathy were matters of public knowledge.

As to Mr. Rossetti's second question, I need only refer him to the preface to a volume of collected criticisms published by him in 1867, in which he states that he shall not there reprint any of his critical notices on his brother's pictures, not because he fears to reproduce with the authority of his name what had first been written anonymously, but because such criticisms are comparatively slight and unimportant, owing to his brother's best pictures never having been publicly exhibited.

Allow me to say in conclusion that no imputation whatever upon Mr. W. M. Rossetti's "critical probity" was intended by me in the article which has evoked his censure, nor is any such imputation intended in this reply, which nothing but Mr. Rossetti's reiterated demand would have elicited, and which, as far as I am concerned, must be considered final.

HARRY QUILTER.